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TYLNEY HALL.

BY THOMAS HOOD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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TYLNEY HALL.

CHAPTER I.

"I know not love, quoth he, nor will I know it
Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it."

VENUS AND ADONIS.

"Up, up, my friend, and quit your books,
Or surely you'll grow double."

WORDSWORTH.

"The jars of brothers
Are like a small stone thrown into a river,
The breach scarce heard, but view the beaten current,
And you shall see a thousand angry rings
Rise in his face, still swelling and still growing."

ROLLO, DUKE OF NORMANDY.

IN spite of his admiration of Mrs. Hamilton's sentiment concerning love, and her precept against matchmaking, the Baronet could not resist

the temptation offered by Ringwood's return to push forward his matrimonial scheme. His manœuvres in pursuance of this object resembled the attempt to take a fox in a trap. He baited with Grace Rivers, and laid many a trail up to her, by means of visits and messages, and commissions to Hawksley, in which Ringwood found himself engaged much oftener than he liked. There is a proverb, however, which says "you may bring a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink;" and even so you may bring young persons into company with each other, but you cannot force them to fall in love. Many a message the young man had to deliver at Mr. Justice Rivers's, but, unlike messengers in general, he never stayed on his errands; he never went there superlatively well dressed, or came back with an abstracted or pensive air, nor did he show any particular emotion, when the name of the "first favourite" was proposed as a toast.

Above all, he showed no jealousy whatever of the great attention that was paid to her by Raby

and St. Kitts; on the contrary, he occasionally undertook the delivery of the elegant extracts which his brother had culled for her, amongst the old poets. "Confound the fellow," said the father internally, "it beats pig-driving! the more I want to put him in the right road, the more he won't go!"

Sir Mark was a good deal disconcerted by this perversity in his son, and at last began to suspect that something equivalent to "pit full" must be written over the door of his heart. Under this impression he one day tried an experiment that produced a gleam of hope; but it turned out only a flash in the pan, or, as we should now say, a bad cap. He was riding side by side with Ringwood, and by way of getting at the truth by surprise, he abruptly put the question whether the latter had seen any girl at Oxford to compare with Grace Rivers?

"Nobody—not one," answered Ringwood, speaking with the back of his head towards his father. "How easily I could have her!"

"Have whom?" said Sir Mark, pricking up his ears.

"Puss there," said Ringwood, putting his thumb on full cock, and taking aim along his fore-finger, at a hare that was running into cover.

The promised weekly visits of the young lady at the Hall produced no better result; she only grew more fond of poetry, and Raby became more fond of copying it, to the usual exclusion of Nimrod, ramrod, and fishing-rod.

This congeniality of tastes did not escape the notice of the Baronet, and, with some jealousy as to its probable effect, he endeavoured more strenuously than ever to drive Raby into the field, and Ringwood into the library; but without any other effect than of reviving the old bickerings between the brothers, each attributing to the other the persecution he endured. By dint of importunity Ringwood was induced to copy out something for Miss Rivers, and he wrote out a portion of Somerville's Chase; Raby by the same entreaty was persuaded to join in a day's coursing, and it is

difficult to say which of these fish out of water suffered most in its strange element.

"If it wasn't for your everlasting poetry," said Ringwood one day, "I shouldn't hear so much of my everlasting sporting. I wish to God you would hunt or shoot a little yourself, instead of being such a bookworm. There's fishing is a quiet studious sort of thing."

"Never," answered Raby with emphasis. "I cannot bear the thought even of impaling a poor inoffensive worm on a hook to writhe in agony till he is drowned."

"But you might have a fly," said Ringwood,—"and, as you are so squeamish, you need not even impale a real one."

"True," said Raby, "but I happen to have read Cotton, with his directions for making artificial ones; and really I have no inclination to go through the varied course of sporting which would be requisite only to furnish me with dubbing."

"If I know what you mean," exclaimed Ringwood, "may I be pounded!"

"I speak," answered Raby, "from the book.

I was tempted to read the instructions carefully for their whimsicality. To get only the materials for palmers, and stoneflys, and duns, and other technicals, would take up a greater portion of my life than I am disposed to spare. For instance, I must go bear-hunting, and scuffle with an old black bruin for a little of his skin, being particular to have him well tanned by the weather; then I must draw a badger for a bit of his fur; then I must take an otter for ditto; and then grope the banks for a water-rat and a water-mouse, if there be such an animal. I must beg the Squire for a pluck of hair at his black spaniel on the inside of the ear, and must remember at Oxford to buy or steal a bit of a barge sail. I must go hawking to get the herl of a heron, fox-hunting for the fur of an old red reynard, coursing for the scut of a hare the blackest I can get, and shooting for a rook's wing, a lapwing's crest, and a partridge's tail. I must climb up trees for martins and squirrels, comb black greyhounds with small tooth combs, and go swine-shearing for sanded hog's down. Last, not least, I must shave our black

Tom cat, if he will let me, for the sake of his whiskers, and then, turning him round, I must take a twitch out of his tail!"

"Very well quizzed," answered Ringwood, "only you happen to know better. Every article you mention is to be had at the furrier's or elsewhere; but, if that is all, I will lend you my dubbing-bag, and a pocket book of flies, ready made."

"I am obliged to you for the offer," replied Raby, "but to tell the truth, I entertain some serious doubts of the humanity of fishing; in spite of the authority of Izaak Walton, who tells us he leaves water-rats to be destroyed by other hands, for that he is not of a cruel nature, and loves to kill nothing but fish. To be pulled gasping out of the native element into another, as painful perhaps as fire to the human lungs, with a sharp hook sticking through the jaws, or more probably tearing the entrails—"

"Pshaw," exclaimed Ringwood, "that is the old story. You sit poring and poking over books

till you get as sentimental and squeamish as a girl from boarding-school. Let Grace hunt out poetry for herself. For my own part I'd as soon be a man-milliner at once; there's no great odds that I can see between serving young ladies with yards of verses or yards of riband."

"And for my part," said Raby, reddening, "I'd as soon be a ratcatcher at once, as employ all the faculties of mind and body day after day, in the pursuit of worthless vermin. I happen to conceive that man was endowed with powers of mind for higher purposes."

"Yes, to make love chime with dove, and so on, to the end of the chapter," retorted Ringwood. "I'd rather be a wagon horse, and go dozing along to my jingle of bells."

"And what is there after all in your hunting?" said Raby, with increasing warmth. "Why the very brutes beat you at your own game. The superior sagacity and quick sense of smell in the hound direct you the way to go; and the horse enables you to follow by the aid of animal powers

infinitely surpassing your own. And truly, when all is done, a fox's tail is a notable feather in the cap of an intellectual being!"

"It has always been reckoned a manly trophy, however," said Ringwood, "and I cannot help thinking that Hercules, that man of all men, cut a devilish deal better figure while killing hydras, than when he took a distaff amongst the maids, no matter whether he was spinning flax or spinning verses!"

"I thought that argument was decided at Oxford," said the Creole, who had entered the room with his peculiar stealthiness, so that his presence had been unheeded.

"Yes," said Ringwood, vehemently, "and it was given against me! But then it was amongst Raby's own set, pedants, and bookworms, and ballad-mongers!"

"And quite as respectable a set," retorted Raby, "as coachmen, bruisers, and blacklegs."

"I believe that question was decided, too, at Oxford, by the Proctor," said the Creole in a tone that stung Ringwood to the quick.

"Hark you, St. Kitts," he said, "I know your drift. Perhaps I have not trained on, in Greek and Latin, so well as yourself. But the next time you refer to College, I'd advise you to remember that I learned one thing at Oxford, at which you would come off second-best."

"The use of your fists, I presume," said the Creole with a sneer, "or your mawleys, in the elegant slang of the ring. When I fight, it shall be with the weapons of a gentleman."

"Provided gentlemen will go out with you," said Ringwood. "They may choose to be as particular about arms, as you are about weapons, and object to a bend sinister."

"I am used to that taunt, and do not care for it," replied the Creole, with a look, however, which showed that use had not blunted its edge. "But beware of reflecting too often on my birth—the day may come when you will rue your own!" So saying he abruptly left the room; having acted as a sort of conductor to carry off the thunder and lightning which had been mustering between the brothers.

"It is really a pity, Ringwood," said Raby as soon as they were left alone, "that you indulge so often in that reflection on St. Kitts. Of all his defects, that of his birth is the only one he cannot help. I heartily wish old Sir Thomas Browne, amongst his 'Vulgar Errours,' had noticed the very popular one of affixing on the offspring the reproach that belongs to the parent."

"I dare say you are right," returned Ringwood, "but my temper's hot and quick, and he likes to show it off on the fret, just because he can keep his own so well under command. That's why he's always poking me, to snarl and show my teeth, like a keeper with a wild beast; but try to stir him up himself, and except you touch him in one place, he's as cool and impenetrable, confound him, as a man in armour. As the fellow said of his donkey, 'it's only on that bit of raw that you can make him feel!'"

"I must confess," answered Raby, "he is somewhat like Achilles, who was invulnerable all but the heel; but I would refrain from inflicting such an ignoble wound. As for showing you up, if you

would only blink and yawn, instead of growling and getting rampant, he would soon lay aside his long pole, and leave you to yourself."

"It's good advice, and I'll book it," said Ringwood. "And what I said to you, Raby, about sometimes painting your brown study of some other colour, was good advice, too. I don't like people telling me my brother is a milksop."

"They may call me what they please," said Raby. "*De gustibus non est disputandum*,—my palate is not in another man's mouth. But look here, Ringwood, out of the window; you have touched him indeed on the bit of raw! he kept his temper too well barrelled to show us any of the working, but now he is taking out the vent-peg!"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Raby, "he is hauling his horse about as if he'd pull his head off! poor little Toby! And there's a start—spurring and flogging, as if he was making his rush at the end! Here's the old school-boy spite over again—'if I can't lick Will I'll hide Tom!'"

Exactly as Ringwood described, the Creole galloped at racing speed down the avenue, as if

the Judge's Chair had been actually at the end. On coming to the high-road, however, he reduced the pace to a trot, and then turning into a shady secluded lane, he brought the horse to a walk, and threw the reins on his neck. "I am a fool to mind it," he muttered to himself, "for it comes from a fool. Why should I fret and wince under it? 'Tis no fault of mine. I had not the ordering of my birth. Thousands are no more legitimate than I am; men of rank and station. What is legitimacy? a parson, a certificate, and a ring. Is there a stain on me from the womb, a stain like original sin, because my parents were not married? Am I doomed to infamy and disgrace for want of a mere form? Has it made me less virtuous, less sightly, less intellectual! Has it made me deformed in person or deficient of a sense; and shall man affix a stigma where heaven has set no mark! Is not my flesh as healthy, my blood as pure, my body as perfect in all its functions—aye as that of Ringwood himself? But no, no, no, this flattering unction will not do. Walter Tyrrel, you are a degraded being, and it avails you nothing that there are thousands

under the same ban with yourself. Justice may award the shame to the parent, but the prejudice of man entails it on the child. The attainder of the father debases the blood of the son,—true it is, indeed, that not one atom or globule of the tide of life can be wrought upon by a breath,—but the voice of the world says it does, of the world in which I am to live. Grant that the honour or dishonour exists only in imagination; but are there not imaginary sorrows, and pains, and terrors, producing real agonies? What signifies that I am as perfect in limbs, as fully endowed with faculties, as Ringwood, in the eye of nature, when the world will not acknowledge the equality? am not I stamped with a brand, an everlasting brand, never to be effaced by time, never to be removed by honourable achievement, the more hopeless because impalpable and invisible—an airy nothing, indeed, but to which man has given a local habitation and a name! Besides, does the default not carry with it real penalties? will land descend to me, and from me to mine, from generation to generation, as if by divine right, to the end of time?

"No, no, a bastard I am, and must remain; and worst of all a brown bastard—aye, that was the word! There is a stain on my face as well as on my birth, a tinge derived from the blood of negroes, black heathens, and—the word chokes me—slaves!"

During the utterance of the foregoing soliloquy he had, through excitement, gradually exalted his voice; and, as soon as he had pronounced the last word, he heard it repeated in a lower tone. Supposing it to have proceeded merely from an echo, he never turned his head; but, in a few moments, he distinctly heard the same voice calling on "Walter Tyrrel." Considerably startled, he looked round for the speaker, and his brow darkened with displeasure, when he recognised the dark face of the fortune-telling woman, as she made her way through the hedge by the side of the road. He was immediately going to ride forward, but she sprang suddenly before him, and caught hold of the bridle.

"Let go, woman," he cried, his face flushing with anger, and his hand mechanically raising his

riding whip above his head. "Let go, I say; I will hear no more of your infernal gibberish."

"Lower your whip!" she answered, with the tone and look of a command. "I have been used to stripes lately; but, of all that breathe in the wide world, Walter Tyrrel is the last that should lay a lash on *me!*"

"Begone, hag," cried the Creole, in a still fiercer voice, for he was offended at the familiarity of her address; "if I touch him with the spur, you may repent the consequence."

"And your repentance," said the woman, reddening, "should exceed mine ten times told. But you know not what you do. I know things that, to hear, would thrill you with ecstacy—and others that should freeze you to the spot!"

"Enough," said the Creole, "I know my own fortune better than any gipsy—I must and will pass!"

"Pass over my body then," said the woman, releasing the bridle, and planting herself with outstretched arms full before him in the middle of the road; "ride on, Walter Tyrrel, break

these arms that nursed you, and mangle this bosom that nourished you."

"Impudent impostor!" exclaimed the Creole, rising into uncontrollable rage. "But you have been set on; dare to propagate this malicious invention, breathe it into another human ear, and it shall be the last syllable your tongue shall ever utter, if I tear it out with my own hands."

"Walter Tyrrel," replied the woman, as if she delighted in repeating the name, "no ear but your own has heard it, and no other shall hear it, provided you will listen to the rest. But deny me that, and I will proclaim it at noon-day from the Market-Cross."

"Say your say, then, and be quick," replied the Creole, partly astounded by her audacity, and partly unwilling to defy the threat of a being so wild and determined.

"What I have said already," said the woman, "is true; were the sun, moon, and stars now shining together in heaven, I would swear by them all, and by Him who made them, that what I have said is true. You owe all to me that a child owes to its nurse."

"Insolent, crazy beldam! that cursed story again—this is beyond earthly patience," cried the Creole, almost foaming with rage. "But that you are a woman, you should roll under my horse's feet."

"Walter Tyrrel," exclaimed the woman, while angry sparks flashed from her black eyes, "dare not to miscal me again, if you would have my blessing and not my curse! but the story is strange, and I am strange," she added in a milder tone, "and I ought not perhaps to expect your implicit belief in it, without some token of its truth. Did you ever see a face like this?"

As she spoke, she drew from her bosom a small miniature, and held it up to St. Kitts, who instantly recognised the features: the shock and the surprise made him feel faint and sick; his eyes dazzled, his brain swam, and a loud sound, as of water boiling, began singing in his ears; he dismounted hastily, or he would have fallen from his horse. "Gracious God," he gasped at last, "my father! where—how did you get it?"

"Be composed—be a man," said the woman, taking his hand between her own, which trembled,

however, as violently as the Creole's. "You know then I am no gipsy juggler, no gossiping impostor, no crazy beldam. Now summon your senses, and think back as far as you can into childhood, and tell me, if you remember any such name as—Indiana?"

"It seems as familiar to me," said the Creole, "as my own. My dear father mentioned it on his death-bed."

"And coupled it with a curse," said the woman.

"No," said St. Kitts. "In his delirium he accused her of stabbing him, but he was sensible when he died, and Indiana was amongst the very last words he murmured, with forgiveness and a blessing."

The woman's head dropped at these words; she hastily seated herself in the dust of the road, and covering her face with her hands, she wept till the tears gushed out between her fingers. It did not last long: with a violent effort she overcame her grief, and rose up, and spoke with a firm voice.

"Had she stabbed him to the heart, it had been but a just revenge. There are deeper and more

cruel wounds than visible daggers can inflict—wounds that bleed inwardly, and are incurable; and Indiana had her share! But come, take a seat beside me on this bank,—this meeting is trying for us both."

The Creole silently seated himself by her side, his whole frame quivering with intense excitement and agitation. There was one absorbing question in his heart, which it yearned, yet dreaded, to have solved; and the first word of it rose as often to his throat, and was choked there, as the "Amen" of Macbeth. The woman perceived his emotion, and spoke first.

"I divine your thoughts. You think, perhaps *fear*, that I may be your mother?" Ringwood nodded. "I was your mother's dearest friend—her sworn sister—your nurse. She was raised from the same station in life as my own, to be your father's favourite; and I lived with her as her companion,—the partaker of her fortune, the depositary of her secrets and wishes. You were as frequently at my breast as at hers, as often on my lap as on her knee; and I believe you owe

me as many embraces and kisses. But your father was stabbed for inconstancy—your mother fled the Island—and I became what you see me—an outcast and a wanderer."

"And my mother, is she still alive?" enquired the Creole.

"If she still lingers in this world of woe," replied the woman, "it must be, like me, as a forlorn wanderer."

"And you," said the Creole, "you are poor, perhaps houseless; gracious heaven! I remember you have been in prison at hard labour."

"Ay," said the woman, smiling bitterly, "but I complain not of any thing I can now suffer at the hands of man. As for my poverty, I feel it not; so put up your purse. Should I want money, however, your hand, Walter Tyrrel, is the only one on earth that would not revolt my pride, though pride and I must now seem ill-assorted companions. And now, mark me; the world is a worthless weedy place to me; but its prejudices are of importance to the young and hopeful. My acquaintance can do you no credit.

You must neither name me, nor recognise me, before others, whoever they may be; and this meeting must remain a secret in our own bosoms. Seek me not; heed me not; mention me not; but if I should summon you at any time, by sign or by token, be sure, Walter Tyrrel, to come to me, whether noonday or midnight, as if it concerned the salvation of your soul."

"I will obey your bidding, upon my honour and faith," replied St. Kitts; "and now this dear portrait—if gold will purchase it—"

"Not the Indies," said the woman, replacing it in her bosom; "your mother, in times of doubt and danger, confided it to me; and bound me, by a sacred oath, never to part with it, unless she claimed it from me herself. When I die, that trust shall devolve on you; and now, farewell! I hear footsteps in the lane. God bless you, Walter Tyrrel! God bless you!" His hand was snatched, and fondly kissed, and she again forced a passage through the hedge, and disappeared; leaving the Creole sitting on the bank, scarcely certain whether all that he had seen and heard had not

been a day dream, and a delusion of the senses. He conjured up anew, in his mind's eye, her face and figure, as with outstretched arms she confronted him in the road, and bade him ride over her; and then fancy acted over again the whole of this singular scene in the drama of his life. "One question more," he exclaimed, suddenly starting to his feet, with a gesture of his arm, as if to detain her; but she was gone, and young Twigg stood grinning in the spot that she had occupied.

"Haw! haw! haw!" shouted the citizen's cub; "stage playing, eh? Good morning, Mr. Walter, I hope I don't interrupt rehearsal?"

"I am no actor, Sir," said the Creole, who was in no humour to relish a jest.

"I beg pardon, but I meant no offence," said Twigg, junior; "I thought you was spouting for practice, and was glad to see it. Thinks I, he'll come to our shampeater in character. I'm going to sport a fancy dress, myself. The governor means it to be a jolly good to-do — Vauxhall gala—Twelfth-night—May-day—Masquerade, all rolled into one!"

"It is an extraordinary story," said the Creole, musing.

"An't it, my boy?" said young Twigg, with a smart punch of his elbow. "The regular thing to astonish the natives! I'll lay a rump and dozen you won't guess my disguise!"

"A Jack-Pudding, maybe," said the Creole, not very well pleased to have his thoughts interrupted by the rude freedom of his companion.

"No, no; hang Clowns and Fools," said the other, "they're so common. I'll put you up to it, my boy; but mind, it's a word and honour secret. It will be a precious lark, and make such a famous squall among the petticoats! I'm going to dress up as the brown gipsy woman, that put dad and 'Tilda into such a funk!"

"Ay, a gipsy-woman; but the portrait," said the Creole, relapsing into abstraction, "the portrait stamps truth on it all!"

"Brawvo! ancoore!" shouted the delighted auditor. "That's your sort! But go on, man, I won't laugh at you agin—go on about the miniter!"

"I must really beg pardon," said the Creole

recovering himself, "but my thoughts are engrossed by something very interesting I have just heard—I mean to say that I have just read."

"Ah, that's a pity," said the cub. "I never read. It spoils one's sparklers, and makes a feller shortsighted, like your cousin Raby. He'll have to sport goggles afore he's twenty-one, and how will the gals like that? No, no, my boy, I mean to keep a sharp eye in my head, to have a slap-bang at the swarms of partridges, and the flocks of pheasants, on the First of September!"

"Have you bagged any birds?" enquired St. Kitts by way of saying something, his mind still wandering as to time and place.

"That's a good un," said young Twigg, "and this is the 12th of April!—Thankee, I owe you one: but you did not catch me out. I was born within Bow-bells sure enough, but I'm not quite such a cockney as that. But by jingo," he added, looking hard at the other's face, "you seem wool-gathering! Come now, you're trying to look as wise as King Solomon, but it won't do—it's all sham-Abraham," and he gave St. Kitts a shaking

and a slap on the back as if he was saving him from choking.

"'Sdeath! Sir," exclaimed the Creole, out of all patience, "attempt such a liberty again and I'll knock you down! There, Sir, is your road, and this is mine; and I must beg to be left to myself till I can find better company than my own."

"Two can play at that," said the cub, winking knowingly, and throwing himself into a boxing attitude. "But what's the fun of showing fight, and shying up our castors, for nothing a side? Nobody wanted to rub you the wrong way, and yet you begin swearing and spitting; why you're as crusty, man, as a notched loaf; a regular bear with a sore head!"

"Well well," said St. Kitts, fearful of prolonging the discussion. "I am hasty, and something has happened to ruffle my temper:—so forgive me, and shake hands; and let us part till I am fitter to enjoy the pleasure of your society."

"Why, that's well said," answered young Twigg, "so tip us your daddle. And now we're friends, take a friend's advice. Mind and

come in full fig to the Feat; for the governor means to ask every body, whether he knows 'em or not, so we're sure to have all the tip-top swells and nobs of the place. It won't be a very bad move neither, if you brush up your dancing a bit, and practise your toe-and-heels, and double-shuffles; for there's some first rate hands at horn-pipes a-coming; and you won't like to be cut out at the hop on the lawn."

"I will go into training on purpose," said St. Kitts, endeavouring to smile.

"There's lots of time," said young Twigg. "The gala can't be got up till May or June, and I'm going to have a spell at the shop in the mean-time. The governor sticks up like buck-ram for industry and application; so I'm to bundle to-morrow, and not to show my nose agin at Hollington till I'm asked."

"Well, I wish you a pleasant journey," said the Creole, "and so good morning." The cub nodded a good-bye; and St. Kitts, putting his horse to a canter, rode back thoughtfully to the Hall. Instead of alighting at the front door, he

went round the house to the stables, where he dismounted, and, throwing the rein to a groom, made off by a back way into the garden, in order to recover his composure before he encountered his uncle or cousins. After revolving all that had passed in his interview with the brown woman, the conclusion he came to contributed little to the ease of his mind. It was too probable that his mother had been at least the descendant of a slave, a taint, even in the third and fourth generations, attended with absolute degradation in the West Indies, where it is not unusual for a lovely brunette, but a shade too brown, to find herself obliged to look on at a dance, for want of a gentleman with spirit or sense enough to stem the popular prejudice, by taking her for a partner. It is true that in coming to England the Creole had passed beyond the influence of such invidious distinctions; but early habits and daily example had so impressed on him the colonial theory, that he naturally estimated himself by its degrading scale, and was, in his own eyes, a being branded with a mark of inferiority wherever he went.

Besides, he had fallen under a new reproach, that of illegitimacy, which has more sway in this island than in that of his birth; and the terms which the brown woman had used in speaking of his mother as the Colonel's "favourite," if not actual evidence, seemed to imply that Ringwood's accustomed taunt was founded on truth. The possession of his father's portrait, the recognition of himself, the allusion to Indiana with her jealousy and revenge, allowed him no room to doubt the veracity of her who claimed to have been his nurse; and he could not help wishing the Atlantic between himself and one who knew so much of his history. In spite of her injunctions as to secresy, he could not feel certain but that he should one day be claimed as a foster-child by the "Queen of the Gipsies," a title which her bearing and appearance had obtained for her in the neighbourhood, and he foresaw, and felt in anticipation, the raillery and ridicule that would arise from such a text. Consistent as the woman had been in speech, there was a fitful wildness in her manner, which, on reflection, seemed to belong to

insanity; and he trembled to think what crazy projects her infirm faculty might suggest, to his personal disgrace and annoyance. Embittered by these reflections, his temper turned against the wanderer, and he fervently wished that the next time she came before Justice Rivers, it might be for some offence that would incur transportation beyond the seas, for the term of her natural life.

CHAPTER II.

" I can't get out—I can't get out!" said the starling.

STERNE'S SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

" I say this house is as dark as ignorance, though ignorance were as dark as hell: and I say, there was never man thus abused."

MALVOLIO.

" Here I am, caught like a fox in a gin, a bear in a pitfall, a thief in a jail, a porpoise in a net, a frog in a well! I shall be killed and grilled! Help! help! Fire! Murder! Thieves!—Thieves! Murder! Fire!"

CAPTAIN CROWE.

THE next morning, as Twigg Junior had predicted, he was turned out of the Hive like a drone, and sent to mingle with the swarm of busy bees in the metropolis. As soon as he was gone, Twigg Senior clutched the great green umbrella that so offended Miss Matilda, and set out on a visit to Squire Ned, at his cottage, in order to confer with him about what he called " setting up in a new line of business." The reiterated wishes of

his wife, and the urgent remonstrances of his daughter, had induced him to think seriously of taking the field, and having his old "ideas taught how to shoot;" particularly as he had remarked that every man of property carried a gun, took out a licence, and shot over his own grounds. As his son had formed a sort of acquaintance with the Squire, he pitched upon the latter as the person he would request to put him, as he called it, "through his exercise;" and his present errand was to see whether Ned would undertake the instruction of a pupil so adult.

After half an hour's walk, he came in sight of the chimneys of the cottage, the refractory one towering a yard above the others, with a zig-zag pipe, wearing a tin gipsy-hat. Another specimen of Ned's mechanical ingenuity confronted the visiter at the very threshold, for on lifting the knocker, a small spring panel immediately revolved, and exhibited the words "Not at Home." On the fall of the knocker the inscription disappeared.

"By jingo," exclaimed the citizen, "it's not a

bad plan, and particularly if you've got a decidedly serious servant, that objects to tell tarradiddles about your ins and outs. If the master's abroad though, there can't be any harm in one's stepping in to sit down and rest a bit, for I don't feel myself quite such a good walker, now I'm a man of property, as I was when I used to trudge on errands!"

As the knocker, however, produced only the same intimation, he looked carefully about for a bell-handle, and at last discovered a little brass knob, whereat he gave a pull; but, instead of producing a ring, it unlatched the door, which immediately flew wide open of its own accord: a very necessary contrivance of the Squire's, in order to obtain access to his own premises, for his indoor establishment consisted only of an old housekeeper, who was so deaf that she would not have answered the summons of a Great Tom of Lincoln. Accordingly, after two or three fruitless halloos, Twigg entered the passage, and, treading as cautiously as if he expected at every step to let off a steel-trap or a spring-gun, he came to a door on

the right, which stood open, and allowed him a glimpse of the very thing he wanted, a settee.

On entering he found himself in a circular room, panoramically painted, as if in continuation of the prospect which was seen through the one window, and so interesting was the landscape, and so beautifully executed, that even his fatigue did not prevent the citizen's making the tour of the chamber, and inspecting the picture in all its parts; particularly admiring a village church, the tower of which had a dial going by clockwork, and, as he satisfied himself by his own watch, keeping time very exactly. To observe the general effect the better, he shut the door, which closed with a spring, and then placing the settee in the centre of the room, he sat down to enjoy the exhibition at leisure. The same clockwork which regulated the church-dial gave motion to the sails of a windmill —it was altogether the most wonderful and amusing sight he had ever seen, and he had just come to the resolution that he would go back for Mrs. T. and Matilda, when a sudden thought occurred to him, which made him jump up suddenly from

his seat, and begin to inspect the painting much too closely to be of advantage to its effect. But the search was in vain. The door with invisible hinges fitted to such a nicety, that he could not discover the least crack in the wall; and, in the bewilderment of his admiration at first sight of the panorama, he had taken no note of its situation. In vain he trotted round and round like a rat in a trap; and quite as fruitlessly he exerted his voice; nobody heard him: a painted shepherd kept regardlessly piping on to his flock, and an arch-looking Phillis sat provokingly smiling under a tree, as if in ridicule of his distress. There was no bell-rope to apply to, but, after a close scrutiny, he perceived a little knob at a cottage window; he pressed it, the lattice flew open, and a spring-tray protruded, furnished with biscuits, decanters of wine, and some glasses. Twigg was too much flustered, however, to profit by the discovery; every moment he got more nervous, to think how the Squire, almost a stranger to him, might resent the liberties he had taken in his house. With a tremulous hand he attempted to restore

the cottage-window to *statu quo*: but not knowing the knack, or applying too much force, the spring suddenly snapped, and it slammed to with a crash and a jingle that assured him he had broken all the glass that was within. He was in an agony. One moment he prayed, the next minute he swore; he cursed his wife and his daughter for advising the visit, and himself for entering the house, and the Squire for contriving it. He consigned the painter to perdition, and the builder, and the man that had sold the glasses—then he appealed to heaven to get him out of the worst scrape he ever was in in all his life; and then, in a paroxysm of impotent rage, he shook his fist at the insensible shepherd, and made faces at the smiling shepherdess.

It occurred to him, at last, that as he could not show himself the door, he might turn himself out of the window; but Ned's window was not made like other people's; and it would neither throw up, nor pull down, nor open sideways. It would not even allow a single pane to open, like the old casements, to give him a little air, of which he really stood in need. The drops hung on his

forehead, and he was as flushed in the face as if he had been cooking a dinner for the Beef-steak Club. A new experiment presented itself, and with no better result; a large knob, painted like a ripe apple in an orchard, being turned, set a bird-organ playing, and he did not know how to stop it; although, in the excited state of his nerves, the music had as jarring an effect as if it had been the clang of a copper-foundery. He wished himself any where;—back in business,—in a horse-pond,—in a mob,—in an Irish row,—in a storm at sea,—in the Bench,—in a condemned cell,—in a coffin. He sat down, and jumped up again; he wrung his hands, — stamped about, — ground his teeth, and raved. He called on the Devil to fly away with him; wanted the earth to open, and swallow him up; wished himself turned into a spider, or a blue-bottle. In short, he did and said a thousand extravagances; and all the while he vented his exclamations and lamentations, the infernal bird-organ kept warbling its accompaniment, driving him as wild and rampant as a cow at the buzz of a breeze-fly. He slapped his own face, pulled his

own nose, and did all he could; if it had been possible, he would have kicked himself for being such an ass as to get into such a pound.

Passionate men are always unreasonable. An hour passed away, and the Squire did not make his appearance, for which Twigg bestowed on him all the abusive epithets, simple and compound, his memory or imagination could furnish. He swore that honest Ned had gone out, and remained out on purpose; and gave him credit for the most atrocious and barbarous devices. He thought he sniffed brimstone; then, that the floor was growing hot under him; then, that he felt trap doors opening beneath his feet. Stimulated by these terrors, he had almost made himself up, like an imprisoned cat, for a desperate dash through the window, when he observed another little knob, which he supposed would liberate the sash. He pressed it, accordingly, when lo, instead of the window flying open, as he expected, two outer shutters flapped to, and, in an instant, by way of climax to his horrors, he was immersed in Cimmerian darkness.

What a situation for a man of weak nerves!

He did not dare to stir; but he bellowed murder till he was as hoarse as a raven, and as hot, faint, weary, and thirsty as Governor Holwell in the Black-Hole at Calcutta. At last, just as he had given himself over, he discovered where the door was, by its being suddenly opened in his face; the smiling shepherdess favouring him with a salute that made him clap his hand in some trepidation to his nose, while the water gushed from his eyes.

"Dark, eh?" exclaimed the Squire, as he looked into the room; "who the deuce——"

"It's me, T. Twigg, Esquire, of the Hive, Hollington," responded a snuffling voice from the interior.

"Stand fast," said Ned,—"soon be all right;" and in a moment the shutters flew back, and allowed the daylight to introduce the two gentlemen to each other.

"Glad to see you," said Ned; "ought to have been home sooner; but Barney cast a shoe. Haven't waited long, eh?"

"Pray don't mention it," resumed Twigg; "a

retired man of property, like me, isn't tied to time. He can always spare a couple of hours, or so; and I never spent any time more agreeably; what with looking at the picture, and listening to the pretty music of the bird-organ. Mr. Squire, you have a delightful fancy-room, here; you have indeed!"

"Pretty well," said Ned, evidently gratified at this praise; "a mere whim. All my own plan,—elevation, section, and all that!"

"Mr. Squire," said Twigg, "I hope it's no intrusion; but having a little matter to talk about with you, I determined to walk over at once."

"Quite right," said Ned, "heartily welcome—pray sit down—walked, eh?—a decent pull,—a bit of a snack will come well after that;" and the host made a motion towards the cottage window, which contained the tray.

"Pray don't trouble yourself," said Twigg, interposing, "I beg you won't,—I insist upon it,—I assure you I lunched five minutes ago—that is to say—I never lunch, for fear of spoiling my dinner."

"Only a glass of wine, and a bite of biscuit," said Ned, still making for the depôt.

"Not for the world, my dear Sir," replied Twigg, taking hold of the Squire by both arms; "I can't digest of a morning, I should have the heartburn; sherry, before dinner, always gives me the heartburn, as sure as a gun!"

In spite of this protestation, the speaker never longed so much for a glass of wine in his life; but he had not moral courage enough to face the disclosure of the damage he had done. Every man has his bug-bear; and Twigg's was a nervous horror of what he called "kicking up rumpuses in strange houses;" and he felt all the anxious terrors of a murderer, who expected, every moment, that the mangled relics of his victim would be brought to light. Afraid, after all his excuses, that the Squire might take it into his head to go to the cupboard, he had recourse to a stroke of generalship. Affecting to have examined one side of the room, he removed the settee to the other, gradually backing, as if for the sake of the effect, till he had planted himself right in front of the

cottage window that enclosed his secret; and in this favourable position he felt more at ease to enter on the object of his visit.

"It's very ridiculous, Mr. Squire," said Twigg, after some preliminary humming and hawing, "and you'll hardly believe it of one in my wealthy and respectable station of life, but I never let off anything since I was a babby—never, not even a pop-gun."

"Very odd indeed," said Ned. "What could your father and mother be about? Not like me. Had a single barrel at twelve, a double at fourteen, won a pigeon-cup at fifteen, the crack of the volunteer rifles at eighteen, and at twenty never wanted a pair of snuffers, when there was a pair of pistols. Nothing like beginning young,—always break your dogs while they're puppies."

"That's very true," said Twigg, "but when I was young I'd no chance, no more than if I'd been born in a bandbox. Boys bred at cheap Yorkshire schools, if they a'n't forbid gunpowder, are forbid pocket-money, which comes to the same thing. With only one suit to our backs we could

never get up a Guy, and till I came up to London I didn't know a squib from a sassage. I don't mind saying what I rose from. Many a time the morning sun seems to get up out of a dung-hill, or a chimney-pot, but he makes his way uppards, and leaves off all in a blaze, among purple clouds, turned up with crimson, and laced with silver and gold like a sheriff's liveries."

"Looks awkward tho'," said Ned, "for a country gentleman not to be up to a gun—very awkward indeed—wonder you a'n't quizzed?"

"That's just what I'm afraid of," answered Twigg; "all the Hollington gentry go volleying about their fields, and it looks as if I couldn't afford a licence,—or that my freehold landed estate, and the game, wasn't my own property. I should really like to pop about a bit, whether I hit nothing or not, just for the look of the thing; and a protection besides, for the country roads always swarm with footpads and highwaymen, and the bye lanes with gipsies and vagabonds. As Mrs. Twigg says, when it comes to money or your life, what's an umbrella against a shower of

shot? There'd be some sense, says she, in a musket and a good mastiff, for I wouldn't give a fig for the little footy spaniels the Hollington gentlemen are so fond of!"

"Mastiff, eh?" said Ned; "very well for flushing a burglar, but won't do for cocks—must have spaniels."

"Well," said Twigg, "that's neither here nor there. It's the gunnery I want to learn; the prime and load, and make ready, present, fire. As I said before, I know no more about it than the man in the moon; and as you've been so kind as to give T. junior a help out in his sporting, if you'd extend your favours in the same line, and give me a bit of a drill now and then, the same would be thankfully received, and gratefully acknowledged."

"With all my heart," said the good-natured Squire; "come along,—begin at once,—have a bang or two at the old barn."

"What, with a regular full load?" enquired Twigg, with some trepidation.

"To be sure," said Ned; "a regular charge—fit to bring down a pheasant."

"Mr. Squire," said Twigg, "I hope you'll excuse objections, but I'm one of the old school, and like to begin at the beginning. A, B, C, first, you know, and then words of one syllable, and then two syllables, and so on. I want to be well grounded in the rudiment; and so, if it's the same to you, I would prefer commencing with flashes in the pans."

"Flashes in fiddlesticks!" said Ned; "phoo, phoo, the barrel's clean—won't want a kicking-strap;—don't be nervous."

"Between you and me," said Twigg, "my nerves are a little out of sorts. I'm afraid I pushed the bottle last night rather too freely, and my hand shakes so, I'm sure I couldn't hit your old barn if it was as big as the Mansion-house! Unaccustomed as I am to public shooting, I should injure somebody—I should, upon my life!"

"Never mind," said Ned, "every body for themselves."

"No, no," answered Twigg. "I positively won't shoot to day, but am obliged all the same. I never meant to begin this morning. I only came

to feel my way; I did indeed; and besides it's getting late. I'll come again, with a long morning before me, Mr. Squire, and we'll pop off like old gooseberry!"

"Name your time," said the Squire.

"Why, then, suppose we say Monday," said Twigg, "or Monday week; or say Monday fortnight; for then I can get a jacket and cetera made against our field-day. I dare say I shall be a rare awkward squad, Mr. Squire; but you must make allowances. I'm raw at it, quite raw—and never so much as let off a penny cannon! But we must live and learn. I expect I shall jump at the first bang or two; but says you, I'd plug my ears well with cotton."

"Monday fortnight, then," said Ned—"that's the fixture. But hold hard—mustn't go without a snack—a glass of wine any how, and success to the trigger!"

"I couldn't drink a drop, if it was to save my life," declared Twigg, fervently wishing that between his host and the cupboard there had been a high wall, with all the broken-glass on the top of

it. A question followed, for which he had good reasons of his own, although its oddness made Ned stare as hard as a man could stare who had only one eye.

"Mr. Squire—if I may ask,—do you keep a cat?"

"Never," said Ned—"take all their nine lives, if they come into the place. Worse than foxes among game! Never kept cats in my life—barring ferrets."

"You astonish me," said Twigg; "I wonder how you manage. At Hollington we should be eaten up alive by the rats and mice, if it wasn't for the cats: I can't say I like cats myself: but they're useful animals in their way; though, to be sure, they play the deuce with us now and then, by getting into our cupboards, and knocking down the glass and china!"

So saying, he looked at his watch and jumped up with an exclamation on the flight of time; whereupon, taking a hasty leave of the Squire, he trotted off with the pace of a man who has backed himself to perform four miles within the hour; two

forwards, trundling a hoop, and two backwards, wheeling a barrow, with a stone to be picked up at every twenty yards.

The ex-citizen, although he had succeeded in engaging a Mentor, to direct him in the field, was not particularly well pleased with the result of his visit to the cottage. He had a violent desire to do as those of his Rome did, and to put himself on a par with his neighbours at Hollington; so that a gun appeared a desirable object in perspective, but the moment that fire-arms were going actually to be put into his hands, he found his courage, like that of Acres, beginning to ooze out of the ends of his fingers. The abrupt character of Ned, too, excited his distaste and distrust. "I don't fancy him," said he to himself; "he's too daring. We must creep before we go; and if he had proposed half-loads at first, or popping off pocket-pistols, I shouldn't have minded; but to begin with letting off a whole barrel of powder and shot, or may be two barrels, doesn't seem prudent. He's a great deal too daring; and, by the way, I observed he'd

blown off two of his own fingers—of course, not by a moderate scale of charges!"

So saying, he clutched more firmly his old weapon, the green umbrella, and gave it a flourish, as if deciding upon sticking to it; when suddenly he heard a low grumbling sound from the hedge, like the maundering of a cantankerous bull. He immediately halted, and spread open his parapluie, which is popularly supposed to be the best object in the world for scaring off cattle; but instead of a bull, an ungainly human animal came scrambling over a stile, and in a moment stood before Twigg like a lion in his path, and scowling upon him from under a pair of black shaggy eyebrows. He was at least six feet high, broad-chested and high-shouldered, long-legged and long-armed, and the upper limbs kept sawing the air like the sails of a windmill, one huge hand brandishing a roll of paper, and the other a walking-stick which showed a good cross of the cudgel. He had a vile overhanging brow, and his deep-set eyes played at bo-peep behind his prominent cheek-bones: his nose was large and his mouth wide, with a projecting lower

jaw, and jowls like a bull-dog. Altogether, it was a countenance that, stamped on the copper coin, would have made a good halfpenny look like a bad one. His lank hair hung unkempt from under a low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat, and his whole suit of apparel was black, somewhat rusty; in short, he looked not unlike what one would conceive of Eugene Aram, part schoolmaster and part murderer, and a very ugly customer, as Twigg felt at a glance, for a man of property to encounter in a long lane without a turning.

"Hold!" said the man, in a harsh, grating voice. "Stand fast, and look to your ways! Do you know where you are a-going?"

"To be sure I do," said Twigg, with a quaver in his voice; "I'm going to Hollington."

"Aye, so you thinks," said the man, "and so thinks the blind as gropes in the dark. But you're a-going a road you little dream on!"

"If I'm trespassing," said Twigg, "I beg a thousand pardons. I'd go a mile round rather than trespass on any gentleman's private grounds. Nobody respects property more than I do!"

"Dirt and dross," said the man, "dirt and dross. Think on your immortal soul; for Death cometh before you are awares!"—and he gave such a flourish of his bludgeon, that Twigg involuntarily made a parry with his umbrella. Like Robinson Crusoe in the thunder-storm, when his powder-magazine, and all the consequences of its explosion, flashed across his mind, as swiftly as the lightning across his eyes, the citizen's fears crowded a hundred thoughts into a second of time. He recalled the threatening letter, with all its horrible denunciations—suspected the Squire had adopted it out of good-nature, to pacify the family fears—and jumped to the conclusion, all in a breath, that the frowning figure before him was that arch-incendiary, Hell-Fire Dick himself.

"Mr. Richard," began Twigg, with as civil a manner as he could assume, and edging off a little to the right——

"Don't Richard me," said the man, warily dodging him: "my name's Uriah, a chosen instrument to do his work"—here a whirl of the bludgeon—"and one what won't do it negligently.

Prepare, I say; prepare for death: the enemy is at hand. There's flames of fire a-waiting for you, and burning brimstone!"

"I know it," said Twigg, with a groan. "Your favour came duly to hand. But is there no way—won't the fifty yellow boys buy mercy? I haven't got 'em about me, but if you'll name your own time and place to send 'em to—shan't we be saved from the fire?"

"No," answered the man, in a tone that startled Twigg like a clap of thunder;—and then presenting his roll of paper at the citizen as if it had been a horse-pistol, he added, "Read this here!"

"If it's the same to you," said Twigg, shuddering, and drawing back as if from a red-hot poker, "I'd rather not. I've had one of your bloody burning notices, and it's quite enough. I wouldn't read another for the world!"

"Die then, and be d—d!" shouted the man, with such a ferocious face and such an awful flourish of both arms, bludgeon and all, that Twigg felt certain his last hour was at hand. Collecting all his energy, he gave his umbrella a flirt open,

full in the face of his enemy, and then, taking advantage of this manœuvre, he sprung past him, and set off homeward at a pace that belongs only to a man who is running for life, dear life. The ruffian he thought pursued him;—he fancied he heard his heavy tread—every instant he expected to feel the formidable stick descend upon his devoted skull,—and absorbed in this retrospective review, he almost ran under the horse's nose before he was aware of meeting the old covered chaise of Doctor Bellamy

"Mr. Twigg," said old Formality, pulling up and bowing, "this is really an unexpected gratification. But, gracious heaven,—if I may presume to ask, sir, what has produced these symptoms of nervous irritability?—for, begging pardon for the liberty of the remark, I have the pleasure of meeting with you under very strong symptoms of excitement."

"It's murder's the matter," said Twigg, gasping for breath; "wilful murder!—Doctor—I've been stopped!—"

"The Lord forbid!" ejaculated old Formality, and in spite of his habitual politeness he pulled his horse round and turned the back of his vehicle on

the owner of the Hive. However, before the old rhubarb-coloured draught-horse could lift his legs into trot, he recollected himself and his urbanity, and desiring the boy to get up behind, he invited Twigg to occupy the vacant seat, insisting that the arterial palpitation and pectoral action would be perniciously aggravated by the walk to Hollington. It was too agreeable an offer to be declined, and Twigg ascended with great alacrity into the vehicle, where he related at full length his tale of terror, concluding with rather an exaggerated description of the bloodthirsty Uriah.

"I know Uriah well," said the Doctor, "and really am shocked to have to use such terms of speech; but moral indignation compels me to say he is a sad scoundrel and hypocrite. He keeps what is vulgarly called a shop of all sorts in the village, and is a general dealer, so general, indeed, that religion is one of his items of trade. The paper he had the honour of offering for your acceptance was indubitably a tract, and his exhibition of sulphur, in a state of combustion, involved a spiritual meaning; for he has a determined pre-

disposition to consign people to a place, which, as the polished Pope says, ought not to be named in polite ears. My truly amiable and excellent partner condescended to deal with him some time, but she was eventually compelled to decline, owing to what, in delicate language, might be called a tendency to mistake troy weight for avoirdupois."

"Ah, like enough," said Twigg. "We had some of the same serious kidney in the hardware line, and precious screws they were. There was that Elisha Dove, he wanted to do me out of some goods by a regular swindle; but I knew he was one of the decided pious, that wrote scripture texts on the backs of his cheques, and that put me on my guard. No, no, I don't see what tracts has to do with trade, and always suspect a man that carries his religion into his counting house, and opens his bible with one hand and his leger with the other. I never meet one of them, but says I to myself 'take care of your pockets!' They cheat and lie on one side of the book, and then set off their tract-giving on the

other, by way of a per contra. I'll be bound this Uriah strikes some such balance against the devil every Saturday night!"

"Mr. Twigg," said the Doctor, "I have the pleasure of entirely coinciding in your disagreeable opinion. The individual alluded to has a little chapel of his own appended to his back shop, and I am credibly informed, by a character of undeniable veracity, that he has seen a letter from Uriah to his town agent, containing a business order for a hogshead of sugar, two chests of souchong, five hundred weight of soap, a barrel of red herrings, and one evangelical minister, all at the lowest quotations."

"I don't doubt it a bit," said the citizen; "I have seen such advices myself."

"To discard what only excites jocularity," said the physician, "I have professionally witnessed the pernicious, and, I may add, fatal effects of this reprehensible fanaticism. I have known patients, in the very crisis of their disorder, terrified into deliriums by the intrusion of this very Uriah at their bedsides, with his ranting exhortations and

blasphemous denunciations. I have known the agonised feelings of the survivors shocked and outraged by his uncharitable and indecent application of scriptural texts to the character of the defunct; nay, I have seen the very clergyman at the grave insulted and interrupted in the performance of his melancholy duties, by the attempts of Uriah to, what he calls, improve the occasion by an extempore discourse of his own!"

"He deserves ducking in a horse-pond," exclaimed Twigg, naturally adding his own terrors to the account. "They're the pests of society. Look at my own case. It's very hard Doctor, Bellamy, that a man of my property cannot enjoy a rural walk on foot, but he must be beset by crazy gipsy-women or ranting methodist parsons! If I get off this time with a fever, I shall reckon it cheap, for my nerves were never so shook in my life! It's like a palsy; but, says you, it's your own fault; a man that has just set up his carriage has no need to walk at all!"

They now arrived at the Hive, where, in spite of Twigg's remonstrances, he was immediately

sent to bed by the desire of the Doctor, who, besides taking away a liberal allowance of blood, subjected his patient to such a rigorous low regimen, that before three days were over, the citizen quite gave up any idea of ever dying by a violent death.

CHAPTER III.

"In every act they see that lurking foe,
Let loose awhile, about the world to go;
A dragon flying round the earth, to kill
The heavenly hope, and prompt the carnal will:
Whom sainted knights attack, in sinners' cause,
And force the wounded victim from his paws!"

CRABBE.

"Violent outcries, howling, gnashing of teeth, frightful convulsions, frenzy, epileptic, and apoplectic symptoms were excited, in turn, on different individuals. Cries were heard, as of people being put to the sword; and the ravings of despair, which seemed to arise from an actual foretaste of torment, were strongly blended with rapturous shouts of glory!—glory!" SOUTHEY'S LIFE OF WESLEY.

"Ay, do despise me, I'm the prouder for it! I likes to be despised!" MAWWORM.

THE formidable personage introduced in the last chapter, under the name of Uriah Bundy, was one of a provincial class of methodists, who, if they had not adopted the name, eminently

deserved the title of ranters, not merely for the bombastic fustian which they uttered, or rather howled, but for the violent gesticulations and antics the body performed by way of accompaniment. In these accomplishments the general dealer in question was eminently gifted, and like certain persons who keep private presses, for the pleasure of seeing themselves in print, so Uriah founded a private chapel, partly that he might enjoy the gratification of lifting up his own voice in a pulpit; for whenever, to use a shop-term, he was out of ministers, he invariably supplied the deficiency in his own person. Indeed it was shrewdly suspected, as the cushion-thumpers became more frequently absent and for longer intervals, and as his sermons increased in length and unction, that Uriah contemplated a gradual retirement from business, and ultimate devotion of himself to what he called his vineyard. This event was looked forward to with considerable gratification by those who sat under him, amongst whom he had acquired the reputation of being a powerful instrument, a phrase particularly happy,

in reference to his physical abilities, for with the voice of a Stentor, he had the strength of a Milo, and when he bellowed, in the slang of his conventicle, about wrestling with the Evil One, he displayed a pair of long brawny arms, and a broad chest, such as would have delighted that enthusiast in back-locks, in-locks, hanging-trippets, and Cornish hugs, Sir Thomas Parkyns, Baronet, of Bunny Park. Indeed it was said by some of the elders of the village, that Uriah, when a young man, had been a notorious wrestler and cudgel-player, although as P. P., the clerk of the parish, says in his autobiography, "he had now laid aside the carnal delights and powdered vanities of his youth, considering himself, as it were, a shred of the linen vestment of Aaron."

In the opinion of his followers his ministry was blessed with abundant fruits, that is to say the walls of his conventicle sometimes rang again with the shrieks and groans and yells, and the whole building shook and rattled with the frantic stamping and jumping. The old men went crazy, the old women into fits, and the young men and maidens

kissed one another, and ranted, and canted, and anticked their caps off their heads, and the clothes off their backs.—The same frenzy pursued them to their homes and hearths. Now and then a fanatic mother haggled her little boy's throat instead of cutting his bread and butter, or strangled her little girl instead of tying her pinafore: but the Devil got all the blame of the deed, and the fame of Uriah increased.

To some ears, however, there was something inexpressibly shocking in passing the chapel-door, and hearing the innocent voices of childhood chanting an infernal chorus, literally extracted from a Hymn Book.—

"I am, I am out of Hell!"

And to some eyes on a week day, when the chapel was converted to a school-room, it was no less repulsive to see the same children, with horror-stricken faces, and abject souls, trembling and shivering at the very name of God; their young hopeless hearts withering the while under the harrowing denunciations of a frantic bellowing

monster, with a face like an Ogre, by way of illustrating the divine invitation of "suffer little children to come to me!" But to sweep off prematurely all the bright beautiful bloom of childhood; to blot out the serene blue heaven of its thoughts with the foul sulphurous smoke of the infernal pit—to scorch up what Shakspeare calls the dew of youth with the heat of nameless fires—to trail over all nature the slime of original sin, and the blight of the universal curse—to involve Hope and Joy, like the sons of Laocoon, in the endless folds of the old Serpent—to exhibit this wondrous fair creation hovered over, not by an emblematic dove, but a ravening vulture—to invest the Deity himself identically with the fiendish attributes of Satan—yes, even this horrible and blasphemous transfiguration passes with some depraved minds for piety, and an act of service to religion; as if from such a faith to infidelity would not be an alluring and natural transition.

The spiritual calling of Uriah was of no slight advantage to his worldly interest; his customers

never thought of weighing tea or soap after such a pattern of sanctity; they were gravel-blind to the sand in the moist sugar, and digested the pebbles in his currants like so many ostriches. In promoting the consumption of one article indeed, his preaching had a direct effect; for Uriah dealt in candles, and so effectually had he stuffed the imaginations of his juvenile hearers with devils and pitchforks, and cauldrons of boiling brimstone, that half the poor children of the parish would not sleep without a rushlight in the room. It may be doubted, therefore, whether he would have attacked the proprietor of the Hive quite so offensively, if he had not happened to receive a consignment of goods by the same wagon which carried Twigg's hardware to Hollington, a circumstance from which the shopkeeper inferred that the family was generally to be supplied from London, instead of patronising his own emporium. A man's private affairs are generally considered sacred from intrusion, and his religion is, or ought to be, held the most

sacred of his private affairs; but our ranter felt no delicacy or diffidence in accosting a perfect stranger, and prying into the concerns of his soul. Modesty is no characteristic of the fraternity, and, to use Uriah's own words, whenever he took the work in hand, he rubbed his face over with a brass candlestick. The sequel has been told. Twigg took to his heels; and the preacher, with a triumphant flourish of his stick, resumed his course exulting that he had made a sinner shake in his shoes; and moreover a sinner that indulged in the vanities of blue and orange liveries, a stately coach, and a heathen behind, as black as Beelzebub himself.

In his next hearer the ranter was not so fortunate. He had gone swinging, and striding, and muttering about a hundred yards down the road when he perceived the brown woman approaching, or, as she was popularly called, the Queen of the Gipsies: a tribe especially marked out for conversion by the ranter, who immediately "straddled across the path," like Apollyon in the Pilgrim's Progress, and prepared himself for the fight. He

accosted her in the same style that he had used to Twigg.

"Stay woman! I have a message unto you! I come with glad tidings."

"Say on then," said the woman, "such tidings have long been strange to these ears."

"You're a cursed race," shouted the ranter, as usual beating time with his stick; "there's a place prepared for you, in the bottomless pit, along with the Devil and his angels—Yes, you, and your father, and the mother as bore ye, and your brothers, and your sisters, and the babes at the bosom, all, every man jack of you, as sure as you dwell in tents! You'll be all biled and fried in hot pitch and burning brimstone, the whole tribe of you, tents, donkeys and all."

"Fool!" said the woman, with a look and gesture of ineffable scorn, "stand aside and let me pass!"

"Not till I've convarted ye," said the ranter, frustrating her attempt to go by. "Not till I've stirred up your conscience like stirring up marrow with a spoon; and made you howl over your sins

like a flogged hound. You're a stray sheep, and I'm the shepherd's dog as you're to be driv' by into the fold."

"Bark on then," said the woman, quietly seating herself on the bank by the roadside, with something of her usual waywardness, for at other seasons such an interruption would have roused her into fury. Possibly she had time on her hands and was willing to be amused by his wild absurdities; perhaps she was inclined to vent a splenetic humour in wordy controversy with a being as strange and violent as herself; however she sat down, and the ranter took a seat by her side; but not till he had cut a preliminary caper, shouting "Glory! glory!" and promising, with an appropriate whirl of his weapon, to smite the wicked heathen back and belly, hip and thigh. The woman however interrupted the very first sentence of his sermon, speaking to him with the tone and manner that she would have used to a slave in St. Christopher's.

"Take your eyes off me. Let go my hand,—and sit farther apart!"

"Ay, ay," said the ranter, "you wouldn't care

if you and all goodness and holiness was miles and miles asunder! but I'll so duck you, and bob you, neck and crop, and dip and wallop you in the Red Sea, that afore we parts, you shall be as glad to hug me, and cling to me, as a drowndin' kitten to a pail."

"Fool! idiot!" exclaimed the woman. "Is this vulgar jargon to give your faith a victory over mine?"

"I speaks as I am bid to," said the ranter. "It's the gift of tongues; and I won't go for to pick my words, no, not if you was the Queen of Sheba, and stuck all over with peacocks' tails. I've tackled worse sinners than you—ten times worser and wickeder—tough old greyheaded sinners possessed with devils; but I've drawed 'em out, tooth and nail, as you'd draw a badger. And I've grappled with young sinners too, tender women, and maidens, and I've took them by the arms, and by the shoulders, and by the neck, and by the waist, and shook out their devils as you'd shake the gravel out of your shoe!"

"Hands off, villain!" exclaimed the woman,

suddenly starting to her feet. "Dare to touch me, and you shall find I have a devil in me too!"

"That's him!" shouted the ranter, also rising up; "that's the devil as spoke; I knowed his voice. Many a tight tussle I've had with old Cockahoop! Ay, many a stiff round on it; but, thanks to grace, I always broke slap-dash through his guard. And then I so tongue-banged him, a slap here, and a slash there"—here he went through a bout of single-stick—"that he hadn't a sound spot on his black carcass as big as a tester: no, not from the top of his horns to the tip of his tail! But I am called to the work; and as I wrastled with him, so will I wrastle with you, thou Jezebel, thou painted sepulchre, thou wicked pagan heathen!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed the woman, while a red spot rose on her forehead, and a wild and dangerous light flashed from her dark eyes, "were it now as it has been, for the least of those infamous names thy vile flesh should be cut quivering from thy bones with the cart-whip; and the musquito and the maggot should be the sole dressers of thy wounds! Stand off, I say! one

pace nearer, and thy blood be on thine head. I warn thee, let me pass untouched."

"Not without the embrace of charity," bellowed the ranter, with a wild flourish of his arms and hideous contortions of his countenance; "Not without the kiss of peace and good will;" and he sprang towards her. His arms were flung round her neck, his face pressed closely against her's; she was sinking under his weight, when suddenly the sharp-pointed knife, described by Squire Ned, entered the ruffian's side. He yelled fearfully—aimed an ineffectual blow—staggered a few paces off—howled a curse—rolled his eyes horribly,—and fell backward in the dust!

The wound, though severe, was not mortal. After lying insensible for some time, he revived; his ears ringing with the confused sound of human voices, amidst which he gradually distinguished repeated cries of "Here! Tigress! Fury! Vengeance! Vengeance! Vengeance!" With some difficulty he raised himself on his elbow, and as the mist cleared away from his eyes, he perceived Dick the huntsman trotting up the lane, followed

by two whippers-in, and the Baronet's pack of fox-hounds, which had been taken out for an airing.

"Zounds Bob!" exclaimed the huntsman, as he pulled up at the wounded man, "here has been a game at sharps!" he immediately alighted, and Bob did the same, resigning their horses to the second whip, who stood aloof with the dogs.

"Odd zookers!" cried Bob, as he assisted in removing Uriah to the side of the road, and placing him in a sitting posture with his back against the bank, "it be th' ould rantipole parson himself! I tould un his being so hard-mouthed to folk would some day get un a sorting!"

"Hold hard, Bob," said the huntsman; "it's not the time to open on him. Uriah, how goes it—how d'ye feel? Come! Hold up man, hold up! you'll have another chance for it; you harn't booked a place yet in the dust-cart!" But Uriah made no answer. He doggedly clenched his teeth, and fixed his look on the opposite hedge; pressing his own hands to his side, and resolutely resisting every attempt that was made to examine his wound.

"Let un alone, if he's so sulky, let un bide," said Bob, who owed the ranter an old grudge. "I'm bound he have only got his desarts. He giv plenty o' tongue about my backsliding; but he do's the like himself, and backslides all the year round. Them saints can always find ice to do it on, winter or summer!"

"Tie that up, Bob," said the good-natured huntsman, "and don't stand jawing at him when he's bleeding. Speak up, old cock: you won't give it in, will ye? I know ye're game, and you'll soon get second-wind. Old Nick shan't crow over ye this turn. You shall give it him, beak and spur, for many a long day to come, and cut his comb for him, till he staggers, blind and groggy, about the pit, like a raw-head and bloody-bones!"

But even this appeal, although so admirably adapted to the character and calling of the ranter, could not extort a single syllable from the iron jaws of Uriah, who, like Cassio, was suffering at once under the smart of a body-wound, and the pang of an anticipated gash in his reputation. He was, therefore, not very solicitous that the fleshy

hurt should be probed or pried into, lest it should lead to the detection of the other sore; and prudently deferring speech, he applied the whole force of his mind to consider the best mode of warding off the questions and conjectures which his condition would be certain to excite. At first he thought of giving out, that Apollyon, weary of defeat in so many spiritual contests, had assaulted him in physical encounter; but as such a battle would only have obtained credence from his own followers, by whom he was already invested with the sanctity, and, as some old women affirmed, the visible halo of the old apostles, he resolved on framing some story which should throw the odium of the sanguinary deed on the infidel and the heathen, in which terms he included all those who did not take tickets or shares in his spiritual little-go, called Sion Chapel.

He had just made up his mind to this course, when, to his great delight, he hailed the appearance of his own tilt cart, which was used for the conveyance of soap, candles, saucepans, and other heterogeneous articles, to the houses of his cus-

tomers; besides occasionally acting as a family carriage, when Uriah, his wife, and offspring, wished to attend a love-feast at some distant tabernacle, or the quarterly conference of the sect. It was driven by a slim, pale, tall pole of an apprentice, with an abundance of top and lop, as the foresters say, who had answered Uriah's advertisement for a serious youth, who could bear confinement six days in the week, with an express stipulation that he should attend chapel on the seventh; for, like our modern zealots and legislators, the ranter was not content that the Deity should receive his dues voluntarily, but he insisted that the divine revenue of homage and worship should pass through human hands, and be liable to a spiritual or worldly percentage, for its enforcement and collection, by self-constituted bailiffs and interested agents.

"Oh the holy!" exclaimed the driver of the tilt cart, as he saw his master and pastor bleeding by the road side; "here's a sight! the scoffer has turned a sticker and stabber; and the Evil One rejoiceth in the blood of the saints! Never mind, master, you're a blessed martyr; never mind; bleed

away,it's all for glory! There'll be miracles done with your skull, and wonders with your shin bones!"

"Hold your tongue, you Balaam's ass! and bring the cart nearer," said Uriah, speaking, at last, like Roger Bacon's brazen head; "I didn't bind you to me to preach and pray, but for to mind shop and drive the horse."

So saying, he uplifted his burly body, and, rejecting the assistance of Dick and Bob, began to stagger towards the tilt cart; but the serious apprentice hastily whipped on the horse some half-dozen paces, and began to explain to his master.

"The Lord forbid! I wouldn't have you get into it for the world. It's chuck full o' goods, particularly hardware; and I wouldn't have your precious wounds fester'd and aggravated by cankerous brass candlesticks, and spouts of copper kettles; there a'n't so many saints upon earth as one can be spared. I'll go and unload, and be back in the singing of a hymn."

"Stick as you be!" bellowed the ranter, and, in

a moment, he was hanging at the back of the cart, where he had no sooner introduced his head under the tilt, than a female face bolted out at the front, enveloped in a huge straw hat, decorated with what a gardener would call a "remarkable fine blow" of ribbons. A body followed, clad in pink muslin, with abundant flounces, and white cotton stockings, bound round the ankles with the yellow strings belonging to a pair of tarnished satin sandals. The young lady was handed from the shaft with more haste than gallantry, by the abashed Jedadiah, who jumped down after her, and, like a tethered lamb, stood as distant as a grasp of the long reins would allow him, to receive the rebuke of his principal.

"A Jezabel, a Jezabel!" roared the voice of Uriah, from the interior of the cart, whilst the girl scudded off like a hare, provoking a merry so-ho! from all the huntsmen.

"Truly," cried Jedadiah, "the Wicked One has abused my senses. She seemed as modest a damsel as ever begged a lift, being bound to see a sick mother, and her feet blistered with long travel."

"Drive on!" growled the voice of the ranter; "drive home!" But the huntsman interposed, and spoke in at the front of the cart. "Zounds, Uriah, put us on the scent a bit. Tell us how you got your hurt. Who did it?"

"A man—a man," answered Uriah, impatiently, his voice now getting weaker.

"Well, but tell us his markings, boy," said Dick, "and I'll take him if he's within twenty mile, at kennel, or on the pad."

"Short — and stout made," said the ranter, hatching a lie circumstantial, "with a hard face —and a wicked eye—red hair—bandy legs."

"That will do," cried Dick. "Jump up, youngster, and drive him home steadily; and keep your sheep's eye to the road you're going!"

"And don't 'ee fall a courting th 'ould parson by mistake," added Bob, from his saddle, "but gie thy sweetheart a smacking buss, like this here"—and he cracked his whip—"and tell her Bob sent it, with my sarvice to her sick mother, and a bottle of daffydowndilly. Ware hounds, tho'! — Zookers, Dick! — how that message do

make him goo! Well, th 'ould roarer is taken off his work, any how, for a month or two."

"Not he," said Dick, remounting, and getting under way with his hounds; "he's no such chicken. The blood-letting will be as good to him as spring physic; and he 'll come out again as sleek in his coat, and as plump in his carcass, as the Squire's Suffolk Punch. But, look yonder, Bob, over the gate!—There 's a fellow skulking along the common, and making for the copse—see how low he runs, and bobs behind the bushes. Forrard, Jim, forrard, and ride home with the pack—and you, Bob, come along with me!"

In an instant the huntsman bounded over the gate, followed by the whip, and both were galloping over the field at their best pace, in a straight line towards the object of pursuit; and not unmarked by the fugitive, who redoubled his exertions to gain the wood, making desperate rushes through hedges, and extraordinary jumps over ditches, occasionally receiving a severe fall. As the horses had a deep, clayey, ploughed field to get over, with a wide brook, before they reached

the common where the fellow was running, he had a tolerable chance of gaining the cover before they could come up; and every nerve of man and horse was strained to the uttermost. At last the pursuers reached the brook, the pursued having attained to within a hundred yards of the copse

"Hark forrard!" shouted Dick, gallantly dashing into the water, the cry and the example being echoed by Bob, and, after floundering for a minute or two, both horsemen contrived to scramble up the opposite bank; but the delay in the stream had given an important increase of distance to the runner.

"We shall lose him, we shall, by Jove!" exclaimed Dick, ramming the spurs into the flanks of his hunter; "he's a bare fifty yards from the cover, and full of running!"

In fact, the man was making, at the top of his speed, for the sylvan sanctuary, in whose tangled labyrinths he might have dodged and eluded a dozen huntsmen: a minute's more running would have sufficed to bring him into its shadows, when suddenly he was seen to fall headlong, and although

he rose again instantly, and attempted to proceed, it was only to be dashed prostrate again with greater violence than before. He had no sooner risen the second time on his feet, than a hand was at his collar.

"A splitting burst you've given us," said Dick. "Little Tomboy never looked for such a sweat this morning, when he curvetted out of the yard We're all right, Bob; it's the rascal we got the slot of—shortish and stoutish, and hair reddish—baddish face, a cock eye, and bandy pins."

"He have an ugly murdering phiz of his own, haven't un?" replied the first whip. "I say fellow, what hast thee got to say for thyself?"

"To-day is Friday, isn't it?" enquired the captive, without raising his head, and he was answered in the affirmative.

"You needn't grip me so hard, then," said the man, with a tone and look of utter despondency. "My doom's doomed. I wouldn't run a foot, not if you was to give me a mile for law. It's more nor I know how I ever came to try it on, for I never escaped nothing yet. Any body else would

have run the common from end to end, without catching his foot in a wire. But that's my luck!"

"As sure as ever I winded a fox," exclaimed Dick, "it's Unlucky Joe!" for in the doleful face before him, scratched as it was, and bleeding, and plastered with clay, the huntsman had not recognised the unfortunate ex-postillion, who was clad moreover, or rather disguised, in a tattered smock-frock and an old pair of velveeteen trowsers.

"Odd zookers!" cried Bob, "so it be! But, lord! how he have transmogrified! So ye cotched your foot in a snare, eh, Joe? why there be a halter a-making, man, to go round thy neck!"

"So you have taken, Joe, to pad the hoof," said the huntsman, "and borrow money at long dates? A fellow, as starvation poor and lean as you look, might do the likes for a bit of bread, and not deserve to swing for it neither; but dang it, man, how came you to try your killing-knife on the old Methodist?"

"Me!" said Joe, lifting up his hands and eyes in astonishment: but the habitual despair of the fatalist immediately returned upon him, with the conviction of the futility of any defence. "It's

no use my saying anything. Here's another black card turned up, and gallows is trumps!"

"Why, you don't mean to confess, do you?" said the huntsman, in some surprise at a man's not attempting to get up a story, after he had run so stoutly to save his life.

"If I don't confess, myself," said Joe, "somebody will confess for me; so, guilty or not guilty, it's all one. Other people proves alibi's; and if I hadn't been here, I should have been somewhere else; but that's my old chance. I know my fortune without a gipsy. As I'm too poor to sleep any wheres but the open air, I can't be burnt in my bed; and, as the sergeants won't list me, cause I'm short, I shan't be shot; and, as the press-gangs won't look at me, I arn't to be drowned; so hanging is likely enough, for I know I shan't die natural."

"Nay, Joe," said the huntsman, somewhat touched by the poor fellow's picture of his destitution, "every body has a chance. If you can, really, hold up an innocent hand, and say not guilty,"—

"Nobody ever believed me yet," answered Joe, "and it's too late to try now. My dice always runs one way. Mayhap after I'd danced my dance upon nothing, and been leg-pulled, and hung a full hour, and stroked all the old women's wens, there'd come a reprieve on a lame post-horse; for that's my luck!"

"Phoo—phoo, man," said the huntsman, "that an't quite so sure to follow as a turnspit behind a hare."

"It has followed me ever since I was born," said the predestinarian, "and that was of a Friday. I've never had a turn in life—never! Misfortune fights fair with other folks; but, as for me, I'm kicked about arter I'm down. I'm hunted, and haunted wherever I go—from village to village, and from town to town, with a curse sounding arter me, like a kettle at a dog's tail. I'm knowed every where for being unlucky at whatever I put hands to; and what signifies honesty, and soberness, and industry, with t'other character tacked along with it? I can't get charity, 'cause I look able to work; and I can't get work, 'cause I'm

reckoned unlucky, and I may as well be put out of my misery at once. I don't mind dying, for I'm sick of my days; and, if it pleased God Almighty to chuck down a handful of sudden deaths, you'd see me scrambling after one, aye, as hard as ever a barefoot beggar-boy for a copper out of a coach-window."

Seldom are the utterers of such sentiments so sincere as Unlucky Joe was, in this depreciation of existence: like a long-standing cup of tea, life generally grows sweeter and sweeter towards the bottom, and seems to be nothing less than syrup of sugar at the very last. The desponding, hopeless creed of the fatalist, however, was one especially calculated to sicken the heart, and to sadden the soul, and to wean the owner from a world paved all over with black stones. According to an old astrological theorist, there are stars which ray forth darkness, as well as others that distribute light, and under some gloomy star of the former class, the unfortunate post-boy considered himself to have been born, and that he was doomed to walk in its shade to the end of his days. He

saw nothing before him but a dreary prospect, done as it were in Indian ink, where he was to be perpetually haunted by a malignant demon, thwarting every honest endeavour, misdirecting every innocent aim, perverting every good intention, aggravating every unwary accident, and converting even the achievement of a given object into an untoward event. There are many believers in the same doctrine, for almost every man's existence affords some dark building-plot for the foundation, some period of accumulative inflictions, swelling each after the other like the inky waves, with a storm in the distance.

> "As if calamity had just begun:
> As if the vanward clouds of evil days
> Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
> Was with its stored thunder labouring up."

To pass from the graver to the minor concerns of life, no card-player exists, but must some time have endured, and wondered at a run of ill-luck, setting in with the inveterate steadiness of a monsoon, and all the consumptive deadliness of an east wind; as if Fortune were a real divinity,

equally jealous and inexorable, and who, for some neglected sacrifice, had entailed this protracted and bitter expiation on her votary.

A slight sketch of the history of the decline and fall of Unlucky Joe, from the era of the death of Bedlamite, will show that his imputed evil genius had not been idle in the interim. He had been discharged by five successive postmasters, for falls and casualties, which had inflicted cuts, sprains, bruises, and fractures, on his own person. He had been rejected by the officers of the army, the navy, and the parish; he had been imprisoned for poaching, because he picked up a dead hare; discharged one King's Birthday, and committed the next morning for sleeping in the open air. He had been crossed in love by the only girl he had ever addressed; he had been made a father by a frail fair one he never saw; and, to conclude, he was in custody for a murderous act he had never contemplated; penniless, friendless, and hopeless. In this abject state he gave up striving with his fate, and the superstition that had him enthralled in its web, immediately pounced upon him, and

wound him round in a preliminary shroud, even as a spider serves a devoted fly, when the insect has ceased its struggles.

"It's no use preaching hope to me," he said; "my sentence is booked. You're as sure of the blood-money as if it was down on the nail. Such as it is, my life's worth forty pounds to some on ye; and my body will fetch a trifle, besides, from the surgeons; so you may as well begin raffling for me at once. You can't keep my head above water. I'm overloaded; like the man a-swimming, that went down when a blue-bottle settled on his bald head. If I was to be hanged with a rotten thread, it wouldn't break, for I know my luck!"

"Boddikins, man!" said the whipper-in; "what made ye take then to leg-bail? If people do want to put their necks out, his worship, Justice Rivers, have no objections to showing them the right line."

"I don't know why I run so," answered Joe; "but I seed the hounds a-coming, and recollected about Bedlamite; and bolted, I don't know why. I'm sure it warn't for my carcass; for, God help

me, it's as used to hard knocks as the gable end of the Bell, where they played at fives. Mayhap I didn't like to look Sir Mark in the face, for they said he fretted as much over the old grey as over his own brother. But come, lead on to the cage—for I know I'm to be a jail-bird; and the sooner my neck's pulled the better, for such a poor doomed hunfortunate fellow as me!"

"To be sure," said Dick, "the killing poor Bedlamite was a mortal grievous job; and if I had knowed who I was chasing, I won't answer for it, that I wouldn't have galloped over you with Tomboy, and so let one horse revenge the t'other. As for sticking the methodist, a judge and a jury must pick that out, for it's beyond my skill; and so, as you're for Master Gregory's man-trap, jump up behind me, and let's be jogging."

The prisoner, as desired, quietly mounted behind the huntsman; and no primitive quaker, with a similar prospect of martyrdom, ever went to the House of Bondage more calmly, meekly, and lamb-like, than Unlucky Joe.

CHAPTER IV.

CLAUD. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.
BEN. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

"The world is gone crazy and spins round contrary;
Madge would have Roger, and Roger loves Mary;
Peggy seeks Peter, and Peter sues Jenny,
Sis sighs for Colin, and Colin wooes Winny,
Polly loves Diggon, and Diggon hates Polly,
Kate drowns for Simon, and he hangs for Dolly;
Sing hey! and sing ho! and all love is a folly!"
THE GREENE GARLANDE.

THE interview with the brown woman had a marked effect upon the Creole. He became reserved, thoughtful, gloomy, and irritable; though he subdued his temper before his uncle and cousins, and vented it elsewhere; for he was one of those that are civil to Richard, but rude to Dick;

complaisant to Thomas, but snappish to Tom; polite and obliging to his superiors or equals, but harsh and imperious to his inferiors and dependants.

"Od mem," said Tibbie, in answer to a question from her mistress as to what she thought of her nephews, "they're just the weal o' the kintra. Yon Ringwood's a bonnie callant, baith frank and free, aye daffin and lauchin, wi' a civil word for a' body; and his brither's a douce, discreet, wise-like lad, and bonny forbye, and hauds weel till his beuk; but ou, mem, yon lad wi' the brown face they ca' the St. Kitts, is a thrawn body! An auld tyke couldna be mair cankert! I did but just speer at him—for ye see, mem, I was thinking as he cam frae the Wast Indies, he wad ken aiblins aboot puir Sandie, for Sandie's gane to some place that begins wi' a B, Bermudies, or Barbadies, or Ben-coolin, whilk nae doot is a muckle mountain like Ben Lomond, or Ben Nevis.—sae ye see, mem, I did but just speer at him a word or twa aboot Sandie, for among a' thae black creturs, and brown creturs, he'd ken Sandy brawly—"

"I believe, Tibbie," said Mrs. Hamilton, "my

nephew, the Creole, is rather sensitive as to any allusions to either black or brown."

"Sensiteeve, mem!" exclaimed Tibbie, "he was just rampaugin! I canna mind the tae hauf o' the ill-names he ca'd me; but he bade me gang, my troth did he, intil the Dub o' Darkness."

The Scotchwoman, in truth, had stumbled upon the Creole in a moment of excitement, when he had just come from a skirmish of words with Ringwood; and the argument had ended as usual, namely, with a touch on the "bit of raw."

Smarting under the taunt, he determined to break through the brown woman's injunction, by seeking her out, and insisting on a disclosure of all that she knew with regard to his birth; and he had just ordered out his horse for the purpose, when he was invited, by a message, to accompany the family on a visit to Hawksley. He immediately complied, though reluctantly, but with a much better grace than Ringwood, who made a dozen excuses, which were overruled.

"Well," said the latter to Raby, "here's another visit to Hawksley, I suppose my father is going to

in the commission, and wants to learn the justice-work. How do you go?"

"In the carriage," answered Raby, "with my father and my aunt."

"And I may ride with St. Kitts," said Ringwood, "a pleasant companionship, considering we were at high words an hour ago. I'll lay fifty to one, you don't guess the subject of our dispute?"

"The beauty of the marriage service, maybe," said Raby, "or a few words in favour of banns and licences."

"It ended in something of the sort," said Ringwood, "and so far you're right. But it began about different kinds of beauty."

"A chivalrous subject truly," said Raby; "and of course each knight chose a fair lady for his paragon, and maintained the pre-eminence of her beauty in the tilt of tongues."

"Yes, a regular set-to;" replied Ringwood, "one stood up for Miss Rivers, and the other for Miss Twigg."

"Heavens and earth!" exclaimed Raby, "what a comparison! And was St. Kitts so absurd as

actually to set up as a model that animated Dutch doll, with great staring black eyes, ruddle cheeks, and a redder mouth, with an everlasting wooden smile, like a ship's figure-head?"

"No," said Ringwood, "St. Kitts did no such thing. I chose to back the Dutch doll myself."

"You, Ringwood!" exclaimed the brother, with unaffected surprise, "you set up that ogling, simpering, lisping, piece of affectation, in opposition to the artless, natural, Grace Rivers? But you were bantering him."

"I am not apt to banter," said Ringwood, in an offended tone. "When I speak, it's always straightforward; and my words aim direct at my meaning, like bullets at a mark."

"So much the worse," said Raby. "I am sorry for it, for in such a question St. Kitts had you at a vantage. The whole world would give it against you."

"How do you know that?" said Ringwood; "is the whole world of one taste? Why, a dozen men can't agree about a dog! Ask the Squire which is the handsomest hound of the

pack, and he will say Challenger; ask my father and he would name Hannibal; for my own part, I should give it to Brusher; while Dick swears by Grasper, and nothing else."

"True," replied Raby; "about such shades and degrees of beauty, every man may differ from his neighbour. But when the question is mooted between a Venus by Phidias, and a statue by Tablet the stonemason; a Madonna by Correggio, and a Queen Bess on a tavern-sign; a Dresden-china May-queen, and a common earthenwere shepherdess—Oberon's mate, and Punch's wife—"

"Capitally matched," exclaimed Ringwood, "and no doubt would keep step well in harness. I know I'm not such a quiz as you are; but I have eyes in my head. I'm reckoned a fairish judge of the points of a horse; and if I can tell whether a nag has a good figure, I suppose I can see whether a girl's shapely; at all events, I can see the difference between Miss Twigg and a Dutch ship with a doll's head, though you have proved you can't."

"I am content," answered Raby, "that I

can see the difference between Miss Twigg and Miss Rivers, which you are equally unable to appreciate."

"I know the difference between them," said Ringwood, "as well as you do; nobody said they were alike. But what has that to do with one's choice, any more than the fillies for the Oaks? One may be a bay and the other a grey, and they may both be favourites, and find backers for all that."

"True," said Raby, "and I have heard that the veriest jade of the race gets golden opinions from some simpleton or other, who deems her the paragon of symmetry."

"And I have heard," said Ringwood angrily, "of perfect Solomons for learning, that talk about Phidias and Venuses, being smit by the first bread-and-butter Miss from boarding-school that chose to set her cap at them."

"Ringwood," said Raby, speaking hastily, and reddening, "if you mean to liken the accomplished, elegant, and amiable Grace Rivers, to any such artificial coquette, I feel bound to say

the degrading comparison does her gross injustice. If in face and figure you are too blind to discover the united charms of a Rosalind, an Imogen, or a Laura, at least in the excellence of her mind, and the virtues of her heart, you ought, if not lost to feeling, to sensibility—"

"Aye, there you are on your hind legs, in a moment;" interrupted Ringwood, "but did I get vicious and rear up, and lash out, when you degraded Miss Twigg into Mad Moll, and Moll Flanders, and Judy, and the devil knows what besides? But hark ye, Raby; fair play's a jewel. Every body has a right to their own taste. You have yours and I have mine. And I 'll lay odds the young ladies differ in their tastes as much as we do. The copies of verses that Miss Rivers is so fond of humming and strumming, Miss Twigg, maybe, would turn into curl-papers."

"I should never feel surprised," said Raby, sharply, "at any act of Vandalism from Miss Twigg; if she were even to tear leaves out of Spenser to put her hair in, and to try the heat of her tongs on the pages of Milton."

"Like enough," retorted Ringwood. "Nor should I die of wonder if I heard Miss Rivers singing halfpenny ballads, or repeating Little Bo-peep."

"Except, that there is one circumstance," said Raby, "which makes assurance doubly sure to the contrary."

"And what is that," enquired Ringwood contemptuously, "which is to be such a safe hedge?"

"That she possesses," answered Raby, "all the sense you want; all the taste you are without;—and all the feelings for the beautiful that you think you have."

The colloquial pepper had been shaken out thus far, when, luckily, before the top of the castor could quite come off, the Baronet and Mrs. Hamilton appeared at the hall door, where the carriage was in waiting. Raby instantly descended the stairs, and followed his father and aunt into the coach; while Ringwood mounted his horse, taking care to place the vehicle between the Creole and himself; and in this order they set forward.

None of the parties spoke till the carriage had

gone about half down the avenue, when the Baronet, after a long look at Raby's flushed cheek, which made the colour still deeper, thus addressed him.

"Mayhap you think, Raby, that I don't know what's a-foot; but an old fox-hunter like me knows which way the game goes, by signs other men wouldn't dream of, such as crows flying, and jays chattering, and sheep huddling, and so forth. I mean to say, that Ringwood and St. Kitts haven't put the coach between them for nothing, and there's a bit of a flush in your face that tells me you know what the bone was that led to the barking and biting."

"My dear father," answered Raby "your hunting experience served you truly: there has indeed been a difference, but I assure you it was quite trivial, between Ringwood and St. Kitts: and subsequently, as you always require the whole truth, between Ringwood and myself."

"Aye there it is," said the Baronet, with a mournful tone and a sorrowful shake of his head, "one down and t'other come on: no two of you can agree. I wish to God you'd be more united, as

the father said in the fable, when he showed his sons the bundle of sticks. Stand by one another, and you are strong; but quarrel and split and you are weak and good for nothing. Look at back-gammon, where two men together are a defence and help to each other; but when they are single, they are nothing but blots, and liable to be taken up at every throw of the dice, and obliged to try back. Book that for as long as you live. And now what was the wrangle about?"

"A mere matter of taste," replied Raby; "the relative claims of Miss Twigg and Miss Rivers to the palm of beauty."

"I should have thought, Raby," said Mrs. Hamilton smiling, "that there could be no dispute on that question; but logic is taught at Oxford; and I suppose some one of you was ambitious to show his skill in defending a daring proposition."

"If it was only logic-chopping," said the Baronet, "I shouldn't mind. I've no more objection to a bout at argument than to a bout at single-stick; only the players oughtn't to lose their tempers. But it might be earnest after all. Miss Twigg's a

smartish girl, with lively black eyes, and pouting lips, and so forth, and a spanking figure, with good action to boot, and might get a stride or two before Grace in the Creole's fancy; those West Indians don't think as we do."

"St. Kitts was Grace's champion," replied Raby.

"The devil he was!" ejaculated the Baronet. "Why this beats cock-fighting! They say, Kate, there's no accounting for tastes, and in fancy matters I believe like does not always pair with like; but think of Raby here, bookish and poetical and sentimental, and so forth, and that always rides a pony or a galloway, standing up for a slapping, bouncing, high-couraged girl, that looks only half-broke, like Miss Twigg."

"My dear aunt," said Raby, eagerly, "pray think of no such incongruity. It was Ringwood who found a goddess at the Hive, and set her on a pedestal above Grace and her three namesakes."

The speaker intended no wound; but his words pierced Sir Mark with the pang of a gaunch from a wild boar, or a gore from a stag at bay. His first impulse was towards the checkstring

and the carriage window, that he might call the refractory admirer to task; but the presence of his sister put him in mind of her admonition, and he remained passive. In the meantime it gave him some consolation to reflect whither they were going, and on the irresistible attractions of his first favourite, whose portrait his imagination painted in the most glowing colours; and then he amused himself in bedaubing and disfiguring the full-length he had lately drawn of Miss Twigg, till, like the ideal lady in the Rivals, "she had a hump on each shoulder, a skin like a mummy, a beard like a Jew, was as crooked as a crescent, and rolled her one eye like the bull in Cox's museum." He then mentally held up the two pictures for comparison, in the very spirit of Hamlet, and wondered utterly how his son and heir could hesitate with such a choice. "It's impossible, I know," he said to himself, "to put old heads on young shoulders, but the head of a two-year old ought to know which to choose. Why there's young Twigg would jump at Grace, for I saw him throwing the eyes of a whole flock of sheep at her; and so

would Raby or St. Kitts; but Ringwood, though he has father's consent and everything, turns away from her, confound him, like musty hay."

There is a saying, which imputes to dogs in general a disposition to fall on and bite one that is bitten; and Sir Mark seemed placed in the very situation of the unfortunate cur. In glancing occasionally through the carriage window, his eye had observed some object that the Creole carried before him on the saddle, and which he at length made out to be a beautiful small spaniel of the Blenheim breed. His curiosity being excited, he took an opportunity of letting down the window and asking St. Kitts where the little animal was going, and he was informed that it was destined for a present to Grace Rivers. The answer made Raby smile; but it gave a fresh pang to the Baronet, and reflecting that Ringwood carried no spaniels to Hawksley, he pulled up the window again, with a suddenness that threatened to demolish the glass.

To Mrs. Hamilton, who had been the depository of her brother's matrimonial schemes, his movements

were no mystery; but she was restrained by the presence of Raby, and did not venture on any remark. The Baronet was not in a humour for talking, and Raby was soon occupied in speculations of his own; so that the three insides travelled on to their destination as mute as three strange reserved English passengers by a mail, who have never met before and may never meet again, and besides have locked up their tongues in their travelling-bags, which are in the hind-boot.

CHAPTER V.

HOBBINOL.—Diggon Davie, I bid her good day;
Or Diggon her is, or I mis-say.
DIGGON.—Her was her while it was daylight,
But now her is a most wretched wight;
For day that was is wightly past,
And now at last the dirk night doth haste.
SPENSER'S SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR.

"For my part I know not whether is best, to live thus or die out of hand; my soul chooseth strangling rather than life, and the grave is more easy for me than this dungeon."
CHRISTIAN, IN THE CASTLE OF DESPAIR.

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.—WORDSWORTH.

THE representative of justice, as does not always happen with Justice herself, was at home to those who enquired for him. He had just begun to lunch in company with Grace; and by way of

economising time, was listening to a report of his clerk on the Hazel Bridge evidence, when the visiters were announced and introduced. The usual greetings were exchanged, but the Baronet, who kept a wary eye on Ringwood, remarked, with displeasure, that he quitted Grace after a very brief salutation, and was soon in close conversation with the magistrate's clerk, Nick Ferrers, a noted cocker, who, in the true spirit of the law, liked to see two game clients pitted against each other, and shedding their blood and feathers for any body's benefit but their own.

The Creole next approached the young lady, and after a few compliments he introduced to her the little spaniel. "He is, I assure you Miss Rivers, one of the true Blenheim breed, for I procured him myself of the Duke's keeper. He is really a pretty fellow, and deserves to be a lady's dog, if you will honour me by taking him into your service."

"I am really sorry," said Grace, blushing, and looking confused, "that you should have taken the trouble, not that I shall feel less grateful for the

kindness of the intention, but Raby was so good as to send me one of the same breed from Oxford, a month ago, and the little creature has become attached to me, and is a great favourite."

"It is like my luck, as Unlucky Joe would say," replied the Creole with a constrained smile. "It consoles me, however, to reflect that as Raby and I have jumped so in our ideas, we must be reckoned fellow-wits."

"He is really a beauty," exclaimed Grace, lifting up the small curly creature, and placing him in the chair next her own, where she patted and fondled him; but on the approach of Raby, the beauty was suffered to jump down, and the new-comer took possession of the vacant seat, while the Creole turned away and bit his lip.

"Well, neighbour," said Sir Mark, addressing himself to the Justice, "to turn back to our old topic, how goes on the car of Jaggernaut—does it load well as usual?"

"It is going at its old rate," answered the Justice, "and I may say, with regard to my own share of its road, the whip is seldom out

of my hand. The Hazel Bridge business is scarcely disposed of, when another case of cutting and maiming, with intent to commit murder, demands my investigation. I really think the public are not aware that, to secure the peace and safety they sleep in, a magistrate must devote so much of his time, and sacrifice so much of his rest as I do: but justice, which never sleeps, demands a vigilant minister. You have heard, I presume, from popular rumour, that Uriah Bundy, the ranter, and proprietor of the emporium, was stopped and stabbed, at mid-day, by a foot-pad who is now in custody!"

"To be sure I have," answered the Baronet; "it was my huntsman that took him, and Dick told me the whole particulars. It's the same fellow that killed Bedlamite, Unlucky Joe, as he's called, and, as I have a score to clear with him too, I would take it kind of your worship to let me be present at his examination, that, if he clear himself of one murder, I may let slip at him with the other."

"With all my heart," said the magistrate,

secretly pleased with an opportunity of having a Matthews-like "At Home," and performing the characters of Solon, Draco, Brutus, and Judge Jefferies, to a select audience. "The prisoner," he continued, "is below, in charge of Gregory, the head constable, and the prosecutor is in attendance in my study. If it be agreeable, therefore, we will transform the drawing-room, for once, into a *Lit de Justice*, and take the evidence. I assure you, Mrs. Hamilton, you will find it an interesting case, and presenting a moral phenomenon perfectly new to me in all my magisterial experience; I mean the remarkable indifference of the accused party, as to penal consequences, or rather, I should say, a kind of hankering to incur the extreme penalty of the law."

"Why, really, sir," answered Mrs. Hamilton, "I have so much of the curiosity of my sex, that I should like to see the culprit, and to hear what reasons he could assign for so very extraordinary a taste."

"And, for my part," said Grace, "I am curious

to behold Unlucky Joe, who has been described to me as the mere foot-ball of fortune."

"So be it then," said the Justice, "Mr. Ferrers, go and bring hither our tools of trade, and tell Gregory to produce his prisoner in court."

The clerk accordingly fetched his writing materials, and installed himself at the table fronting the Justice, who seated himself with much dignity in a large easy chair. In a few minutes the constable introduced his charge, who stared with a vacant careless gaze at the company, but the moment his eyes encountered the Baronet his face twitched all over, and muttering a reflection on "his luck," he dropped his head, and kept looking downwards, as if for the bolt that was to be drawn beneath his feet. The oath was recited by the clerk, and Joe kissed the book.

"Prisoner, what is your name?" asked the Justice, in a tone which he reserved for the chair and the bench.

"Joseph Spiller," answered the culprit, "and I wish I'd never been born to be baptized."

"How do you get your livelihood?" enquired the same stern voice.

"I was a post-boy aforetimes," said Joe, "but now I'm nothing, and nobody suffers from my misfortunes but myself."

"Now then," said the magistrate, with a manner meant to be particularly impressive, "now then, Joseph Spiller,—and remember you are on your solemn oath,—pray tax your memory, and inform us how you were employed during the morning of Friday, the 21st."

"Starving," was the brief answer, and it thrilled every heart in the room, except those of the Justice and his cock-fighting clerk; even the constable winked as if something had been blown into his eyes. The Justice noticed the sensation it had caused, and turning round in his chair, addressed himself to the Baronet.

"Sir Mark, the reply we have just heard is one of those artful touches which even the illiterate know how to introduce as skilfully as as our best orators, when they would appeal to the tenderness,

or rather weakness of human nature. It is thus that they frequently excite a spurious sympathy in the minds of their hearers, and particularly females,"—here he glanced at Mrs. Hamilton and Grace, "which is injurious to the due course of justice, and, consequently, to the interests of society. I say this, merely to put you upon your guard, that you may steel your feelings as I do, and not unsuspectingly lay your sensibility open to be lacerated by what my experience enables me to designate as mere coups de theâtre."

"And now fellow," he resumed to Unlucky Joe, "you stand here charged with stabbing with a knife, or some sharp instrment, one Uriah Bundy, with an intent to kill, a capital felony, whether the murder was consummated or not, and punishable with hanging. What have you to say for yourself?"

"I've no wish to say any thing, not one word," answered Joe with the serenity of a captive Indian warrior when brought to the stake. "I was born to mischances, and this is one. My life an't worth

caring for; and if you hang me, it's only taking the sin of it off my own hands, for it's been in my thoughts afore now. I was cut down my last birth-day."

"By jove he's in earnest though," said Sir Mark in an under-tone to the Justice. "If he swaggered, and shook his fist at death, and made faces at him, like a stage-player, I should know my customer; but he's cool and quiet like a man when his mind's made up. Take my word for it, he'll die game!"

"Dogged, Sir Mark, dogged," replied the magistrate in an aside. "A sure sign of guilt; he knows it will be brought home to him."

"In the name of heaven, Joe," exclaimed the Baronet, "speak up! Make a start for your life at any rate; you can but be run into at the end." But the unlucky one only gave a rueful look at the speaker, and remained silent.

"He has got a defence about him, Sir Mark," observed the clerk, "but it don't crow. They all have a something or other to show fight with; but he knows his cock is over-weighted, and does not care to take it out of the bag."

"Gregory, bring in Uriah," said the magistrate, "and let him be confronted with the prisoner."

The constable disappeared, and in a few minutes came back with the ranter, whose appearance caused an involuntary start from both ladies, for in face and figure he looked the character of a murderer infinitely better than the forlorn, woe-begone, dispirited being who read the part. His countenance, indeed, was more grim than usual: his bushy brow was more darkly knit, his jaw more firmly set, and his eyes, with a sinister expression of dislike and distrust, settled in turn upon each of the company. He had entered on a course of deceit, in which he felt compelled to persevere; and he had made himself up, mentally and bodily, not to be betrayed by word or look.

"Ferrers, give Mr. Bundy a chair," said the magistrate, "and administer the oath." The form was gone through, and the Justice resumed, "Now, sir, take a good look at that fellow, and tell us whether you have ever seen him before."

"It's possible as I have, and maybe I have not,"

replied the ranter. "In his outward man he looks like a reprobate that was about the neighbourhood some years ago; one that hired himself for lucre to the Enemy, to ride post-horses on the sabbath-day, and who was rebuked for the same by many special judgments, in the way of oversets, and stumbles, and falls."

"The very same—Joseph Spiller, alias Unlucky Joe," said the Justice, "your identification is perfectly correct. You recognise him then as the man who stopped you and inflicted the wound?"

"It is hard to say," replied the ranter, with a look upwards; "I always walks in the fear of the Lord, and not in the fear of man, so that the blow comed afore I was awares."

"Your worship," said the clerk, "the huntsman swears in his deposition that the said Uriah Bundy described the assailant as shortish and stoutish, and reddish hair with a squint, and bandy legs; a description which in all its particulars tallies so exactly with the person of the prisoner, that

coupled with the narrative of his flight and capture from the same document, it forms strong presumptive evidence of his guilt."

"I am of the same opinion Ferrers," said the magistrate, "and should not hesitate to commit him at once for trial; but a few questions further may possibly afford stronger proof by establishing the *animus*. I presume Mr. Bundy, you are not aware of any ill blood between you which might prompt the accused to attack your life?"

"The Lord knows," answered Uriah, "it is not in my powers to search man through his heart and reins. To be sure I've been persecuted like the rest of the blessed saints because I scarify people with pitch and brimstone. It's the ways of the infidels to return evil for good."

"You conceive then," said the Justice, "that the prisoner put you in bodily peril in revenge of your attempts for his spiritual welfare?"

"The lofty have heard my voice on the mountain tops," said Uriah, "and so have the lowly down in the valleys. I don't go about preaching on stilts with pudding sleeves and a curricle hat;

even this poor sinful worm have I stooped down to. Yes," he added, shaking his fist at poor Joe, "many's the good track you've had along with your penn'orths of tobacco, and many a word in season, to save your being smoked yourself in the devil's pipe. But it fell among tares! Out upon you reprobate! look what's come of your profane scoffing and scorning. Beelzebub has got you in his claws, and I hear him a-swearing and a-growling over you, like our black tom cat with a mouse."

"Mr. Ferrers," said the magistrate, "I am satisfied of the malice prepense. You may fill up a mittimus, and, in the meantime, I will hear the accused, if he wishes to speak. Joseph Spiller, have you anything further to urge?"

"Nothing," answered Joe. "I knew it would go hard with me, and nothing else—not that I vally my life—I wouldn't sky a copper for it with Jack Ketch himself. If I was let off for murder I should be drawed and quartered some day for high treason, for I'm a marked man.—Nothing can't save me!"

"Oh, the wicked heathen!" shouted the ranter,

jumping up from his chair, and flourishing his arms. "He don't believe in the saving power of grace. But I'll tackle him—I'll thrash the old man out of him, and he shall be born again!"

"I wish I could!" exclaimed Joe, who, like a great modern violinist, played wonderfully on one string; "but that's unpossible;" and he dropped his desponding head in its old position.

"What's impossible, you wretched Pagan?" exclaimed the ranter, his voice rising from a gale to a hurricane; "what's impossible?"—but he suddenly stopped, and turned, with a look of alarm, towards the door, while the sound of persons in contention rose higher and higher.

"Slave, stand back," exclaimed a voice more imperious than the rest: the door burst open, and the brown woman entered, and walked straight up to the table of justice. Of course such an unexpected apparition struck the whole assembly with amazement. The constable, inspired by his old awe, involuntarily retreated behind the magisterial chair; the clerk jumped to his

feet, clutching his pen-knife; and the Justice himself gave unequivocal signs of perturbation. The heart of St. Kitts beat thick; but, above all, her appearance terrified the gigantic ranter. His cheek blanched, as though her knife had drunk what remained of his life-blood, and he was obliged to support himself on the back of a chair.

"Aye!" she said, rivetting her dark eyes on the Justice; "you may well wonder to see me again, of my own accord, under a roof where I once had such a sorry welcome. But I do not come to tax its hospitality for bread and water and stripes.—My errand is to do justice, which does not reside here, though the name is on the door!"

"Woman," said the magistrate, in a tone which showed that he had assumed the black cap, "your present outrageous conduct assures me that the past punishment was but an earnest of worse penalties to come. I know my duty, and will not shrink from it at the menace of a violent woman. Come before me again on the same

charge, and my sentence shall send you to the same Bridewell. But God forbid that the meanest should be denied a hearing, in due time and place, so stand back, and when the present case is disposed of you may speak."

"It is my pleasure to speak now," said the woman; "the proper place and the due season are better known to me than to yourself. Listen, then, for the sentence becomes my mouth better than yours. Release that poor destitute creature, who has no more blood on his hands than in his cheeks!"

"Woman, you are raving," said the Justice; "what would you have—that I should discharge a common assassin?"

"I have been mad," answered the woman, "and may be mad again; but I am not mad now. If murder was attempted, it was by my hand, and this was the weapon." So saying, she drew forth the knife and held it aloft, her black eyes flashing, and her lip curling in scornful triumph, like a second Judith, exulting in the slaying of another Holofernes. "Yes," she continued, "faded as

this face is, and this form disfigured by mean apparel, even these poor remains of what was once called beauty could tempt the violence of a ruffian! Is the tale true, or not?" she cried, turning round suddenly upon Uriah, with the glare of a tigress. "Perjure your soul if you dare!"

Although thus frightfully adjured, the habitual courage of the ranter did not forsake him. "Away, woman," he shouted, "away with you! the Devil is the father of lies, and you are their mother!—you've a whole family of 'em—great grown up lies, and little lies, and lies as can just go alone, —and this here is one! Here's a Sapphira come among us—a Sapphira, to swear, and to forswear, and bear false witness—and I wonder she don't drop down stone dead!—Oh, lying—lying, of all sins I cannot abide lying—it turns me inside out!—She or me must leave the room!"

"Peace then, and dread your own voice," said the woman, "and as you are so devoted to the truth listen to mine."

"Mr. Bundy," said the magistrate, "let her say

her say, uninterruptedly, and you shall have the same privilege of reply."

"I know my innocence," said the ranter, "and the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. I'm in pain, carnal bodily pain. One of us must not tarry. Dead corpses will fall a-bleeding when the murderer comes nigh 'em, and wounds will begin aching when them are standing by as giv them. Ever since that woman's been here, I've had a gnawing at my side like raging mad dogs!"

"O you shallow hypocrite!" exclaimed the woman, with unutterable scorn. "Behold the perjured liar convicted out of his own mouth! He swore it was a man that stabbed him!"

"As sure," said the clerk, "as a cock's not a hen. That spur touched him in the right place, he can never go in again!"

"Egad!" said Sir Mark, "it's all out of him. He rose well at her fence; but she had a deep ditch for him on the other side."

"I think we have a clear case of perjury," said the Justice, "whatever may become of the attempt to murder."

"I'd give a guinea," exclaimed Ringwood, "the Squire had been here! It beats badger drawing!"

The ranter had drawn himself up to his full height; and, like a lion at bay, turned his shaggy head from one speaker to another, as if estimating his own powers to cope with them all, and deciding where to make his first spring. But the odds were against him. Lion-like as he seemed, he was confronted by a being as wild, as fierce, and as daring as himself, and whose calm smile expressed hate quite as fearfully as the savage grin to which it replied. He turned from her with a growl, and then, looking round the room, bellowed out a general curse, waving his arms abroad, as if to assist in the distribution of the malediction.

"You'll all be consumed—all on ye!—and if I stays here I shall be consumed along with ye!"—whereupon he bolted through the door, and his powerful harsh voice was heard muttering far, far away into the distance.

"Let him go, Gregory,"—said the Justice, to the constable who put himself in motion as soon as

the ranter was fairly out of hearing; "let him go. There are such things as warrants in case of need. As for this fellow, he is discharged; and I feel bound to say without a blot on his character."

"And the woman," enquired the clerk, "is she to be at walk or in the coop?"

"Committed," said the magistrate, assuming his Brutus look, and a severe tone worthy of the look. "Committed, were she my own sister. I have yet to consider whether a nameless stroller, of questionable means and notorious violence, should be let loose on society, armed with an illegal weapon, to the terror of his Majesty's liege subjects."

"Liege cowards!" said the woman. "Am I responsible for the fears of the dastardly? Is it wonderful that a lone female, like me, and a wanderer, with no more strength than belongs to her sex, should desire the protection of something more formidable than her own weak arm? The ruffianly blood, still crusting the blade, ought to be my apology!"

"The strong arm of the law will shield you," said the Justice; "but at the same time it shall protect the peaceable from your violence. You are committed."

"Upon what charge?" said the clerk, looking up.

"Under the Vagrancy Act," said the justice: "unless she will now condescend to inform me of her name, her place of residence, and her means of living."

"Ask me those questions," said the woman, "when we are more in circumstances of equality. Ask me apart from your myrmidons, in the middle of some wide barren waste, where no human beings are visible but ourselves; or at dead of night in some lonely ruin; and I will tell you that I have the same natural privileges as yourself: the same right to live where I will, or how I will, to starve on wild herbs and berries in preference to a menial's pittance, and to sleep under the bare cope of heaven rather than the roof of a poor-house. Call me to account in some such spot, and attempt, if you dare, to controul my choice. The

liberty which God gave me, man shall not wrest from me. Lay but one finger upon me, in compulsion, and like other tyrants your soul shall startle at the outcry of 'war to the knife!'"

"A pretty doctrine truly," replied the magistrate, very coolly, "to come from the lips of one who, from her complexion, was born and bred in some land of slaves."

"Aye, you are right," said the woman, "but *there* I was the ruler and not the ruled; I was the mistress and not the slave: a look hinted my will; a word expressed it; and if needful, the whip enforced it. And am I come hither to endure dictation—to have my motives scrutinised—my wishes disputed—my acts condemned—to be ordered"—here her eyes flashed fearfully, "instead of ordering the lash?"

"By combs and spurs," said the clerk, "she has more game in her than ever I saw; if she was a hen, her eggs would be worth their weight in gold, —regular Mother Goose's!"

"I always held to it," said Sir Mark, twitching the Justice's sleeve, "she was well-bred—the blood

some tiptop planter or nabob. Every master must hunt his own as he likes, but in ours we always whip off with a vixen."

"Justice demands examples," said the stern magistrate, involuntarily looking on the opposite wall for the picture of the Roman Judgment; "and in no case can the warning be more salutary than when the vengeance of the law falls on a head exalted above the multitude. The lightning of heaven selects the tallest trees to strike upon, and so should the bolts of justice. Woman, you have obviously received the blessings of education, and have not therefore the vulgar plea of ignorance of your social duties. You have been intrusted with the rule over others, and thereby must be held cognizant of what is proper for your own guidance; you have confessedlyoccupied a rank of life and a degree of affluence which throw the more suspicion on the mysterious anonymous character and the equivocal mode of life you think proper to adopt. I have a painful but imperious duty to fulfil. Master Gregory," he was going to add, "do your duty;" but as he made an appropriate gesture

of authority, his arm was arrested by a tremulous hand, while, in the person of his daughter,

> "Dejected Pity by his side
> Her soul-subduing voice applied."

"For the love of mercy," said Grace, "if you would have me smile, or sing, or sleep in peace for a twelvemonth to come, do not commit her. Let the poor wretch go free!"

"Wretch!" echoed the woman, and she turned a look on the speaker that almost petrified her: "Wretch!—I am wretched, indeed, and have borne with hard names from the aged and cold-hearted; but, from the young and gentle, and beautiful—for I was once their mate—such titles come like the deadly bite of the galli-wasp, that leaves its broken teeth in the wound. Yes, lovely as you are, I was once deemed as lovely, though not so fair in my skin. These bare arms have been circled with gold and gems—this neglected hair has sparkled with diamonds, and this ill-clad figure has been decked with the choicest silks of the loom! In my own island I was loved and adored, young lady, as much as you can be

in this;—and, if ever your young ear has been addressed with the titles of man's idolatry, from mere woman up to angel, know that all those terms of admiration and fondness have been lavished on me. But the cane has been crushed," she added, with a sigh; "its sweetness is gone, and I am nothing now but trash, for the trash-house!"

"Indeed, you must let her go," said Grace, hanging on her parent. "You must grant this request as though it were my last!"

"And in gallantry, sir," said Mrs. Hamilton, "you must grant me the same request, being my first;" but, before the Justice could reply, the woman made out her own discharge as characteristically as her entrance.

"I have made a longer visit than strict politeness would warrant," she said, with the air and dignity of a duchess of the court of Louis XIV: "but my concern for an unfortunate criminal must be my excuse. No compliments, I beg. I will depart, as I came, without ceremony. Positively I will have no attendance; not even to

the door of the room;" and, with a significant but graceful wave of the knife, she retired, curtseying, leaving the whole assembly staring at each other, in a paroxysm of amazement.

The constable was the first to speak. "Come, Master Joe," he said, "don't stand a-pulling a long face, as if you was in the cart with Jack Ketch. Budge man, budge; you're let off his worship says."

"Your worship, if it's all the same," said Joe, addressing the Justice, "I don't want my discharge. As the woman's bolted, I don't mind goin' to prison in lieu on her. It will be bed, board, and lodging, any hows; and that's more than I can get outside."

"No, no, Joe," said the Baronet, "keep out of gaol. As the squire called to me when I was going at the Willow Brook, you won't like it when you're in. Hark ye, Joe: I did mean to give you a rating about Bedlamite, but it has been done for me, for a heavy hand has been laid on you ever since. Only never take charge of a hunter again."

"Not for a purse of guineas," exclaimed Joe, "there would be the same end on it. If there

was a gravel-pit within fifty miles, he'd break his neck in it."

"There, then, take that," said the Baronet, tossing him a piece of gold; "go and get a good feed or two, and when you're in better condition, look out for a job of work."

"The Almighty bless you, Sir Mark," ejaculated Joe, "and prosper you, and send you good luck, and that's saying every thing. It looks like a turn," he continued, gazing at the coin in his open hand, "if I don't lose it or get choused out on it, which is all on the cards. But as for getting work when the money's gone, there's no chance on it. The last place I got, I was turned out in half an hour—but I looked for something of the sort."

"For some delinquency of course?" said the magistrate.

"It was my ill-luck" said Joe, "as got me warning. I was took on at the powder-mills, but the men riz agin me, and wouldn't work along with me 'cause I was sure to make a blow up. From there I went to Lord Thingembob's as wanted a hermit to live on his grounds."

"Well," said the magistrate, "there were no fellow-workmen to object to you there."

"No, your worship," answered Joe, "but I knew afore I applied there'd be somethin agin me; and so up came my want o' larnin. For just arter I was born, the charity school was put into chancery, and I was growed up afore it got out agin, and that's been a bar to me through life. Howsomever, the guinea will keep me a while longer from a brick-back at my neck, or my own garter, and a crowner over my body, for that's as sartin as if I felt him sittin on it. It arn't for nothin I've got sich a nickname as Unlucky Joe."

With this gloomy foreboding, Fortune's poor victim took his leave; and, like Christian, resumed his burthensome journey of life, hung all over with the slime and mud of the Slough of Despond.

"Egad!" said Sir Mark, "he's likely enough to trouble old Stubbs and a dozen more, to find why his body's swelled up, like a cow's after clover, or his cheeks are purple and his eyes staring out of his head. I never yet saw a man recover who

gave himself up so. I remember a gentleman with a gig-shaft through his body, promising his friends he would get over it, and so he did: and another fellow with only a few scratches and bruises, declared himself a dead one, and so it came off. There are many sorts of deaths for Joe, but it's *felo de se* against the field; and particularly if the methodist parson would take him into training. I don't know any thing more likely than ranters and canters to make one sick of the world!"

"You are acquainted with Uriah, then?" asked the Justice.

"To be sure I am," said the Baronet: "he is fond of coming to the meets of the Hunt, and attacks every man in scarlet as he would the Scarlet Lady herself. Many's the time he has turned me down to Satan, and Beelzebub, and Belial, and Apollyon—but I can't go through half the names of his pack. I verily believe some day I shall horsewhip him. Nobody respects religion more than I do, or goes more regularly to church;—but these fellows, confound 'em! are not content with

setting up toll-gates in the road to heaven, but they must be as extorting and as insolent as turnpike men to boot!"

"You should hear the Squire," said Ringwood, "he is the reverse of talkative; but when he meets the ranter he lets loose in earnest. I expect sometimes they will set-to like Broughton and Slack."

"It would be six to four on Uriah," said the Baronet, "and no takers. Ned is a light-weight, and the ranter is a big one. What say ye, Kate?"

"Indeed, I'm thinking," said Mrs. Hamilton, "it would be like Jack the Giant-Killer fighting Galligantus. I never saw a human being so frightfully resembling an ogre as the ranter. He looks while saving sinners' souls, as if he longed to eat their bodies. I have heard from my childhood of Bogie, but I was never introduced to him before."

"And for my part," said Grace, "I have read of Fates, and Furies, and Amazons, but till this morning they were reckoned among ancient fictions. I shall dream of that gipsy queen for a month to come."

"It's a thousand pities," said Sir Mark; "but

I quite forgot her skill in palmistry. You ought, Grace, to have shown her that little white hand of yours; and Ringwood should have had his fortune told at the same time—and Raby too. I will not pretend to say how it is done; but she certainly can see the other side of the hedge. You should have heard her with my nephew when she told him——but what is become of St. Kitt's?"

"Stole away, a few minutes after the brown woman," replied Ringwood, "and by this time he is, may be, taking turn about with Unlucky Joe in learning his doom beforehand."

The Creole had actually withdrawn himself as his cousin described. During the woman's presence he had watched for some secret sign of recognition, or hint of an assignation; but his expectation ended in disappointment, for he could not even catch her eye. Her injunction was forgotten. The approaching term reminded him of the painful probability of returning to college with the question which lay nearest to his heart still unsolved; and he determined at all hazards to follow her, and to ascertain finally whether the

obnoxious reproach of his birth was to be cured or to be endured. Trusting, therefore, to his own invention for an excuse afterwards, he slipped quietly out of the room, and leaving the company to their own conjectures as to his absence, set forth in pursuit of the wanderer. Possibly the latter anticipated this course; for she studiously chose the most unfrequented lanes and by-ways, and it was finally in the loneliest and dreariest spot of the neighbourhood that the Creole, like Saul, held communion with his Witch of Endor.

CHAPTER VI.

You do seem to know
Something of me, or what concerns me: 'Pray you
(Since doubting things go ill, often hurts more
Than to be sure they do: for certainties
Either are past remedies, or, timely knowing,
The remedy then born) discover to me
What both you spur and stop.

CYMBELINE.

My other self, my counsel's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet,
I as a child will go by thy direction.

RICHARD III.

"You have ill obeyed my command, Walter Tyrrel," said the woman, as she seated herself on a log by the way side: "I bade you not seek me; and as the first and only injunction I ever laid on you, it deserved more respect."

"You should have told me all then, or nothing," said the Creole: "it was your own pleasure to invoke my curiosity, and you must lay the spirit you have called up."

"Sit down then beside me," said the woman, "and give me your hand."

"Pshaw! that's a mummery," said the Creole impatiently. "What I desire to know concerns the past rather than the future, so you may spare your palmistry."

"My thoughts glance backwards, as well as yours," said the woman; "and have as little to do with palmistry. Tell me, Walter Tyrrel, is it becoming that I and my child, my foster-child, should meet without a greeting? If I claimed an embrace even, it might be my due."

"There it is then," said the Creole, extending his hand to her, which she covered with kisses— "I am a poor fond woman, and my doting memory will fly back to the time when you hung smiling on my bosom, or lay sleeping on my knees."

"Enough of the nursery," said the Creole, "I

seek not to know where, or how I slept, or what childish ditty served for my lullaby."

"Walter Tyrrel," said the woman, solemnly, "scorn not my love. You may live, like me, to lament the dearth of it. Aye, at this very moment, reckon up the hearts that are devoted to your interest; and can you poll so many, that mine is to be despised? Shall I set down your cousins for two?"

"Yes," said the Creole, bitterly, "but with a tick against each name, to mark them as doubtful votes."

"And what is your own feeling towards your kinsmen?" asked the woman.

"I fear but a neutral one," said the Creole: "it seems to occupy a debateable land between love and hatred, and to make occasional incursions into either territory."

"You must *hate* them," said the woman, vehemently, and with the guttural utterance of the very passion she inculcated. "You must hate them mortally—as I do! There are some persons who profess to repay evil with good, to render

kindness for unkindness; but that is no creed of mine. I return scorn for scorn—wrong for wrong—blow for blow,—and the being that reproached me with my birth, should have cause to rue his own."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Creole, with a start, as if she had touched him with another weapon, "how came you to know of that taunt?"

"I have ears," answered the woman, "and I have eyes; and if I sometimes play the eavesdropper and the spy, it is to prosper the last wish, the last hope, the last blessing I possess on earth. I have heard that taunt uttered; and have seen it wring you like the sting of the scorpion; and well it may!"

"It is true, then," said the Creole, in a tone of despondency, "and I must put up with the reproach."

"It is false," said the woman, "and the scoff must be avenged. Your parents were united in wedlock—holy wedlock as it is called—and, for as much as it is worth, you are legitimate."

"Thanks be to heaven!" said the Creole, "and

to you, for that comforting speech. No form of human words ever sounded so sweetly to my ears as that one sentence! It has plucked a shaft out my bosom that has long rankled there, and has healed the wound of years in a breath. I am now Ringwood's equal! Let him dare to taunt me now, and he shall have it hurled back in his teeth, and the lie along with it."

"Not yet," said the woman, "the time is not come. But remember every wrong; record every insult; add word to word, and deed to deed, till the whole heap of injury be worthy of a stern and deep revenge, a full and final atonement."

"That is a task beyond the stretch of my patience," said the Creole. "I must strike now—now, when I am stricken. In a short time we return to Oxford, where the unworthy insult may find repetition; amongst the fellows—in common-hall perhaps—but the walls shall re-echo with my contradiction."

"And where are your proofs?" said the woman. "Will you refer to the words of an obscure vagrant—a reputed gipsy—who professes to have

nursed you in childhood—a tale very improbable, though strictly true? But be satisfied; the proofs may one day be necessary to establish your civil rights, and be assured they shall be forthcoming."

"And why not now?" asked St. Kitts, with a gesture of impatience.

"Walter Tyrrel," said the woman, "I will not be questioned. If not your parent by course of nature, I am the direct representative of your mother; and in right of my entire love and devotion, ought to possess your gratitude and confidence. Wherefore am I in this country? why in this earth even, but for the sake of Walter Tyrrel? He is the last link of a chain of love, the sole tie that attaches me to a weary world, where otherwise my own hands would long since have shortened my passage to the grave. My sun is set and my day is in the wane, but there is still one bright point in my sky, like the sole star of the evening. You are that solitary star, that particular orb, to which my affections, my hopes, and my wishes all point with the constancy of the magnetic needle. For you and for your welfare, I am

ready to peril my body here and my soul hereafter; and for this, in the absence of her who bore you, your duty is due to myself. Yes, Walter Tyrrel, you must love me, honour me, and confide in me. You must listen to me—and you must obey me!"

"I cannot dispute your credentials," replied the Creole; "neither will I rashly reject nor admit your rights over me: but I may reasonably protest against the mode in which they are proposed to be exercised. Granting such a connexion to be established between us as you have asserted, what possible reason can exist for letting it lie dormant, whilst we mutually suffer by imputation; you—excuse me—as an equivocal character, and I under a stigma which you declare to be unfounded? Your manners and language persuade me that you have occupied a station in life to which my uncle would gladly endeavour to restore you."

"Never," said the woman, with energy, "never will I become a dependent in any of its grades. A free will such as mine has been cannot stoop to be controlled, or even to be gainsaid by advice.

Rather would I lead, as I now live, the life of a savage. With sufficient means to supply the wants of nature, I shall be contented to act as the guardian genius of Walter Tyrrel; and to serve him well and truly I am willing to remain a nameless foreign wanderer, unshackled by any further communion with the world, and as unrestrained by its laws, customs, and prejudices, as the very queen of the wild vagrant tribe I am supposed to govern."

"At least," said St. Kitts, who began to be touched by her devoted professions of attachment, "you will allow me to contribute to your personal comforts. My uncle's allowance is liberal, and, with my own small annuity, enables me to lay by a sum that I would cheerfully appropriate to your service. It would at least provide a decent lodging."

"I am lodged already," said the woman, "and have a home, such as befits my homely fare and my household habits. You shall have my secret, and I must know some of yours. We are met in the very spot for such divulgings; where a change

of the cheek from white to red, or from red to white, would be perfectly invisible. In this solitary lane there is a night-like shadow even at noonday, and the over-arching trees lay their heads together and tremble and whisper like state conspirators. You have heard of Hennessey's Hut?" —the Creole nodded assent—" a temporary lodge, for the use of some gamekeeper who committed murder there, or was murdered, I remember not which. It is there that I dwell, a desolate woman within desolate walls, and in the solitude I covet; —for the hut is haunted, and the vulgar take care not to intrude on my retreat for fear of encountering the duppy—I mean to say the ghost. Some day you shall visit me there; but mind, Walter Tyrrel, not without an invitation."

" Your secret shall be as safe with me," said the Creole, " as in the keeping of the dead. And now, under the same solemn pledge, what do you seek to know from me?"

" It concerns yourself," said the woman. " I have some foreknowledge of your fate; for whatever man or woman wishes to be, they may generally

become; we are masters and mistresses of our own fortunes, more strictly than the weak and the timid are willing to admit. My questions refer therefore to the present, rather than to future contingencies: and in the first place, for what profession does your uncle design you, when you shall quit the University?"

"For my father's profession," said the Creole,—"the army; Sir Mark has promised to purchase me a commission in the Guards."

"Aye," said the woman, "to carry the colours throughout the prime of your life, and be a captain at fifty, if not earlier slain in battle, or carried off by a duel: for your complexion will be apt to excite the raillery of the officers. They may some day think of tracing your pedigree to the black cymbal-player in the band of the regiment,—aye there's a scowl, and your hand seeks for a sword! But to be serious. Your main hope is your uncle: but fox-hunters sometimes die suddenly,—a neck is broken in an instant,—and after the death of Sir Mark, how would your prospects look if gilded with no more sunshine than

would be shed on them by the new Baronet, Sir Ringwood?"

"Cloudy enough, heaven knows!" answered the Creole.

"But again," said the woman, "if Sir Ringwood also should break his neck, for he too is a follower of Nimrod, and that pale-faced youth, his brother, should succeed to the title and the estates, would your hopes be brighter then?"

"Not a whit," said the Creole. "If the first of November were foggy and gloomy, I should hardly look for better weather on the second. My two cousins, with respect to their love for me, are equal shareholders in a very small capital."

"And if Raby should die too," said the woman, "what would happen then?"

"The estates would go to the heir-at-law," said the Creole; "and Tylney Hall would have a new master."

"Yourself, Walter Tyrrel; your own self;" said the woman. "Has it never entered your mind to inquire into the order of the succession?"

"Never," said the Creole. "As a natural son,

the subject did not concern me; nor does it much interest me now, when I am declared legitimate. It is such a remote chance as I would sell, this minute, for Esau's mess of pottage."

"Nevertheless," said the woman, "it is such a chance as may happen. I have known as rapid promotions without a war. In the West Indies, the cassava-worm and a long thumbnail would make it certain; but to you, that is a riddle. As I said before, hard riders get hard falls; and a fox-hunter may be in at his own death, instead of reynard's: neither do I consider that a pale sedentary student must necessarily be a long liver, because he sits when he should walk, and watches when he ought to sleep; no, the thread the fates spin for him, is frail and short."

"It is just possible," said the Creole; "but Raby rhymes with maybe—he may some day, like Prospero, drown his book, and renew his lease of life by turning gentleman-farmer; while Ringwood may tire of the chase. But enough of this: mine is not the patience that can wait barefoot

for the reversion of dead men's shoes. I would rather be the builder of my own fortune."

"Yes—hod-carrier and all," said the woman, with a sneer; "tediously raising it up, brick after brick; and I may live long enough to see the foundation. Time is as necessary to raise fortunes as forests; there must be growth, growth, growth. A year or two may suffice to environ you with belts and clumps of saplings; but century on century must elapse to surround you with the magnificent oaks, and chestnuts, and beeches, that embosom the Hall. Methinks it were a proud feeling to ride down its stately avenue, and looking round on that lordly mansion, and its noble park, to exclaim, all this, Sir Walter Tyrrel, from the sky to the earth's centre, is your own!"

"A proud feeling indeed," said the Creole; "but you might as well, like Satan, take me to the top of a high mountain, and offer me the kingdoms of the earth."

"Walter Tyrrel!" said the woman, angrily, "you have twice quoted from a volume in which I place no faith; and the second time to liken me to a

devil; but I will not now dispute about creeds. You may believe or not in those scriptural prophets, provided you will also give your credence to me. I pretend to nothing beyond human foresight; yet as surely as there is an air we breathe in, so certainly shall you ride between those trees I have mentioned, and you shall feel the proud feeling I have supposed, and think the very thoughts I have uttered! Mark my words, and you may well wish them to come true. The man ought to have some such prospect before him, who hopes one hope that I could name to him."

"It is a flattering promise, truly," said the Creole; "but to obtain such implicit credence, you must go to my aunt's Scotch woman, who puts faith in the second-sight, a superstition in which I am not yet a believer. But what is this hope, which demands such a golden consummation?"

"To—marry—Grace—Rivers," answered the woman, with an emphatic pause between each word, at the same time placing her hand upon his arm as if to judge of the effect of the communication; and she had well judged its power.

He started up, as from an electric shock, and for some minutes stood gazing intently at the speaker, as if he expected a bodily change to come over her; but there she sat, in the same quiet attitude, neither moved by his emotion nor surprised at his amazement. The gloom of the place would not allow him to distinguish the smile that played on her face, but it was implied in the very tone of her voice when she spoke:—

"Pray sit down again, and do not stand staring about me for a black cat or a broomstick, as though I were a witch. Is it any thing marvellous, that one who has known love in all its phases, should be able to detect the signs of the passion in another, more especially when that other has been watched so narrowly as I have watched Walter Tyrrel? I could tell you things infinitely more startling, without reference to any familiar but experience."

"I will doubt nothing you can tell me hereafter," said the Creole, resuming his seat. "By heaven you have bared my heart before me, and shown me hopes, and wishes, as strange to me as

my own person, before I saw it reflected in a glass! But say on, for I recognise the augury, and from this moment you shall be my oracle and my guide."

"I have confessed to you," said the woman, "that I have been a very spy for your sake; I have walked with some as silently as their shadows, and I have talked with others, who thought they were conversing with a man; but that was a masquerade. I have watched and listened; and you shall have the sum of my intelligence. One thing is certain: your love for Miss Rivers must be hatred of your two cousins, for the youngest is your rival, and I fear, a favoured one."

"I believe it, indeed," muttered the Creole, between his teeth; "but Raby shall never have her!"

"You are right," said the woman. "She is destined to prefer Ringwood, by special agreement of the two fathers—aye, clench your hands and stamp your foot! were I a man, nay woman as I am, no living being should stand safely between my heart and its object. But the right hour will

come. You are soon to return to Oxford; but your college studies must be very different to those you have hitherto pursued. Instead of poring over Greek and Latin authors, fix your eyes intently on the book of fate—read your own fortune—turn over the pages of your hopes, your wishes, and your fears; think of Raby and Grace Rivers—think of Ringwood, and of me—resolve what to do, and resolve to do it—there is a bright path before you. In the meantime man may plot, but woman can counterplot; and there is one whose whole wit and will, heart and soul, are devoted to your service. Be of good courage! The taunt will be avenged, the grave will receive its dead; and then, when the Hall is won, and the lady is wed, and my word is fulfilled, Sir Walter Tyrrel himself will be the first to do thus."

As she pronounced the last word, the Creole suddenly found himself in her arms, and before he could disengage himself she had kissed him on each side of the face; she then broke away with her usual abruptness, and hurried along the lane,

leaving St. Kitts to gaze after her, like a man "drowned in a dream."

At last he remounted his horse and rode thoughtfully homeward; and as he reflected on what had passed, his memory recalled a thousand trivial circumstances, inexplicable at the time of their occurrence, but now that he was furnished with a clue, they all tended to corroborate the intelligence he had received. The mutual attachment of Raby and Grace, and the matrimonial scheme of Sir Mark, were soon clearly developed, and then came rash and revengeful thoughts and suggestions more dark and dangerous, which were chased away only to return again, like the flies round his horse's head. As he entered the avenue he involuntarily repeated the words which the woman had predicted he should some day utter in that spot; and the title of Sir Walter Tyrrel was repeated again, and again, and again, in mental echoes till he stood on the very steps of the hall.

Fortunately he arrived a short time before the party returned; and throwing himself on a sofa, he prepared to act the indisposition he meant to

plead, in accounting for his abrupt departure for Hawksley. As he really looked jaded and distressed the excuse was well received; the Baronet, indeed, remarked on his languid appearance the moment he entered, and prescribed a tumbler of mulled wine, and an application to Dr. Bellamy, the latter of which recommendations the Creole declined. It was nothing, he said, but a headach and dizziness which had made him hasten into the air; and, since the ride home he was better, and should be well in less time than Old Formality would consume in coming.

"Egad," said the Baronet, "you stole away cleverly; nobody but Ringwood saw you break cover. We all settled down to it that you had bolted after the gipsey, to get her to tell from her conjuring cards what sort of hands you are to hold through life."

"And here is your dog, St. Kitts, which you forgot in your haste," said Raby, putting down the little animal on the sofa beside his master, who fixed his eyes intently on the speaker, and his distempered fancy whispered to him that a smile of

malicious triumph accompanied the delivery of the rejected spaniel. He returned thanks, therefore, with a bitter frown, which was attributed to the pain in his forehead; but it proceeded from a deeper pang; and from that moment the woman's injunction concerning the feeling he should entertain towards both his cousins was rigidly obeyed. Ringwood had for some time been his aversion, and the brother now became an object of equal dislike. Every sigh for Grace involved an execration on Raby, so that, unnatural as such an allegory must appear, Love carried the torch of Hatred in his hand, and fanned it with his own breath.

CHAPTER VII.

Verily, his temper hath travelled, and put up so frequently at certain inns, that it hath adopted their signs. It shows as fiery as a Dragon, as angry as a Red Lion, as rude as a Bear with a Ragged Staff;—he is as bad company as a Blue Boar, and hath gotten the trick of bellowing out his words at the Bull and Mouth.

EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS HUMOUR.

For my part, I was always a bungler at all kinds of sport that required either patience or adroitness; and had not angled above half an hour, before I had completely satisfied the sentiment, and convinced myself of the truth of Izaak Walton's opinion, that angling is something like poetry—a man must be born to it.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

They met all innocence—and hope—and youth:
And all their words were thoughts,—their thoughts pure truth:
Every new day that pass'd, pass'd them the fleeter,
And hours, though sweet, were chased by hours still sweeter:
Love had adopted them.

THE GARDEN OF FLORENCE.

A few days after the visit to Hawksley, an old acquaintance called at the Hall, and, taking Sir Mark by the foot, instead of the hand, politely

insisted on his remaining seated in his easy chair: in other words, the Baronet was disabled by a fresh attack of podagra; his feet swelled, and, being carefully swaddled up in flannel, were deposited on a sort of stool of repentance.

The gout is a perfect Judge Jefferies in trying the temper, for where it tries it always condemns; and even the good humour of the fox-hunter became bitter bad under the inquisition in his extremities; whilst the aspect of domestic affairs contributed not a little to fret him and stir his bile. Under the inflictions of this disorder, he always became very meditative: as his bodily activity was restrained, his mental energies grew busy; and, when his limbs resumed their usual exercise, his mind became passive in proportion. Thus, when the fleshly race lies prostrate at dead of night, the disembodied spirits rise up and walk; and at morning, when the ghosts lie down again in the grave, the carnal tribes get up erect, and move about—such is the alternate reign of the immaterial and the material. In this posture, Sir Mark had leisure to ruminate on many a cud composed

of sour and bitter herbs, which supplied him with plenty of vinegar and gall; and during his splenetic fits he employed himself in framing fret-work, putting toads under harrows, and similar amusements, in which œdomatous martyrs are apt to indulge, at the expense of those about them. He drove the student to sporting, and the sportsman to study—forbade Ringwood's visits to Hollington, Raby's to Hawksley, and the Creole's to either; whilst Mrs. Hamilton was tormented with complaints, till she almost wished herself back at Glencosie; even the first favourite, had she been present, would hardly have escaped a snubbing. Never before had he been known to be so cross-grained and perverse: he was really a family nuisance, from which there was no escape; for when any one left the presence, he did not fail to compare himself to a wounded deer that is shunned by the herd; and if that failed, there was an absolute command from him, as commodore, not to part company.

Thus assembled round him in the drawing-room, the party would have made a whimsical

family picture, every individual being in a strange element, like the personages in the modern farce of "Fish out of Water," where the ambassador's secretary has to make chocolate, and the cook tries to write despatches. Beside the fire-place, in gloomy gouty state, sat the Baronet himself, occupying a sort of forbidden circle, within which no human foot could approach, without incurring an awful denunciation. He was quite as much out of his line as any one, for he held the "Paradise Lost" in his right hand, and a chair on his left was occupied by some dozens of volumes, forming a pyramid of poetry. On the other side sat Mrs. Hamilton with a newspaper, and a weary sleepy look, as if she had been sitting up all night; but in truth she had only been reading some long prosy dozy speeches in the "Parliamentary Debates" of that period, and listening to her brother's comments, equally tedious and somniferous, for of all disagreeable tics on earth, politics were as odious to her as sheepticks, fanatics, frantics, splenetics, or tic-doloureux. Next to her sat Raby, fumbling amongst fur, wool, feathers, and silk,

pretending to make a May-fly, in deference to the paternal humour; and opposite to him, at a table, sat Ringwood, like a great schoolboy, copying out the poems which his father selected; while at the end of the same table St. Kitts attempted to propitiate the gouty temper by working on an unfinished drawing of "Hounds going to Cover," which he had thrown aside in disgust the year before.

The Baronet eyed them all in turn, making mouths at them, and crabbed faces, which perhaps belonged to pain, and perhaps to peevishness; and, like an armed ship among gun-boats, he kept firing away, now a shot at one, and then a shot at another, wherever he could bring his artillery to bear.

"Here, Ringwood," he said, "copy out this piece of Mr. Milton's poetry, and begin with 'Grace was in all her steps'— Zounds, sirrah, ware gout! Keep off my toes! Can't you let me die first, before you try to thrust your feet into my shoes? Look there, Raby will be dubbing on till doomsday; his May-fly will be in time for

August. Why, boy, if you were thrown on a desert island, like Robinson Crusoe, you would be starved alive, for you can neither hunt, fowl, nor fish! But go on, Kate, with the debate about royal marriages,—or give me the paper, for I see it goes against the grain with you. I know your opinions on such subjects. You would have the heir to the crown go a-courting where he likes; love's a plant with strong roots, and the Prince may plant it at a cottage door, and his royal father is not to speak a word. Parents are not to interfere; there's to be no whipping-in; young people are to run riot, babbling after whatever game they like, hare or fox, deer or rabbit, or even pulling down mutton. Let 'em match, racer and cart-mare, no matter what. I suppose if you heard Dr. Cobb putting up Ringwood Tyrrel and Dolly Wiggins, or Raby and Nancy Trott, or St. Kitts and the queen of the gipseys, you would not stand up, not you, and say, I bar the banns?"

"Upon my word," said Mrs. Hamilton with a subdued smile, "my imagination never suggested any associations so improbable."

"May be not," said the Baronet testily; "but you can't guess a young lover's line quite so well as a fox's; you don't know whether he'll go up the wind or down the wind;—but go on with the speeches—or stay, I'll first take a look at my nephew's picture"—(the drawing was handed to him)—"Aye, going to cover,—and I hope they'll find a fox with three legs, or else they'll never catch him. There's a hound for you; some of Alderman's blood of course, for he's pot-bellied enough for the father of the corporation."

"My dear sir," said the Creole, "it's only in outline, and that apparent bulk, when it comes to be rounded off with the shadows——"

"Round it off with a paring-knife," said the Baronet, who seemed inclined to punish the Creole for carrying Blenheim spaniels to Hawskley. "And here's a nag! Egad, your huntsman is queerly mounted. I've seen a good many horses in my day, some standing high in front, and some behind, and so forth, but I never met with a nag with two long near legs and two short off-legs, like this phenome-

non. He must lean on one side in going, like a yacht in a squall."

"My dear uncle," said St. Kitts, "it is the perspective that makes the legs of such different lengths."

"My best thanks for the information," said the perverse Baronet; "the next horse I buy I'll have it put into the warranty,—free from splint, spavin, ringbone, and perspective. You may well grin, Ringwood; but get on with your writing,—and harkye, do it in a gentlemanly sort of running hand, and not like a charity-boy's Christmas piece. A bit of a curvet, too, with the pen, now and then, is well enough, but the last copy I saw, half your words left off with a little flourish that had the very twist of a sow's tail.—Yes, yes, St. Kitts, it's now your turn to grin; but remember one thing—if it should please God to reduce us to beggary, we mus'nt turn drawing-masters;—no, nor fishermen neither, if we fumble over a hook like Raby.—Curse this gout!—I'll tell you what, Kate, you want me to have Dr. Bellamy, I know you do by your looks,—but if I'm to leave this

world, I don't want Old Formality to bow and scrape me out of it. So mark me; if he enters the Hall, I'll walk away from it; I will, by Jove, if I walk on my hands like a mountebank!"

In this querulous tone the Baronet indulged for some time, till at length the fly-maker jumped up, and, to the envy of his fellow-sufferers, quitted the room, exclaiming as he went, "Now for a trout!"—a fish for which Sir Mark had taken an untimely yearning, and, with the waywardness of a longing woman, he insisted that it should be caught by no one but his younger son.

Accordingly, to the utter astonishment of the household, the studious Raby was seen setting forth from the Hall with a fishing-rod over his shoulder; but, with a prophetic misgiving as to his piscatory success, he carried neither basket nor can. In lieu of these, one pocket was furnished with a copy of Walton's Complete Angler, a volume he was very fond of reading; skipping, however, all the parts that related practically to angling; and in the other pocket was a note-book, wherein he occasionally pencilled scraps of verse, the originals of which

ld have been vainly sought for in the poets
ı Homer downwards. A few stanzas, which he
posed and entered in its pages during his pro-
s through the park, will serve to show the very
ɔortsmanlike tone of feeling with which he could
ɛ over a domain abounding in game of every
, without once taking aim with his mind's eye,
ıutting a wish upon half-cock.

Play on, ye timid Rabbits!
For I can see ye run,
Ne'er thinking of a gun,
Or of the ferret's habits.

Ye sportive Hares! go forcing
The dewdrop from the bent;
My mind is not intent
On greyhounds or on coursing.

Feed on, ye gorgeous Pheasants!
My sight I do not vex
With cards about your necks,
Forestalling you for presents.

Go gazing on, and bounding
Thou solitary Deer!
My fancy does not hear
Hounds baying, and horns sounding.

Each furr'd or feather'd creature,
Enjoy with me this earth,
Its life, its love, its mirth,
And die the death of nature!

Thus provided, he directed his steps towards a stream which flowed round the extremity of the park, and divided the estate of the Baronet from that of the Justice; but a little rustic bridge afforded the means of communication between the neighbours, when they chose to visit each other on foot. The brook was shaded only on one side by trees, so that, from the opposite bank, the angler could freely cast his fly upon the water, and, to judge from many a silvery flash, as the fish sprang out of the green shadows, in skilful hands the line would not be cast in vain. In one part the stream had a slight fall, sufficient to cause a continual murmur and a desirable agitation of the water, for the trout, like champagne drinkers, prefer the brisk and bubbling to the still element: and here Raby ought to have plied his bait; but from ignorance, or some latent reason, he chose a station near the bridge, where he prepared his tackle, and probably no human being ever took rod in hand with such premeditated forbearance towards the finny race.

A single trout was all that he wished or designed to capture; but from the style of his commence-

ment, even that one had a chance of remaining uncaught. The very first cast lodged the fly upon the branch of a tree, to which it was so partial that it refused to return with the line; but Raby was unconscious of the loss, and kept whipping on, till his arm ached, of course without obtaining a single rise. Such bad luck astonished him; for, although he was a novice in the art, he had been led to expect differently by the description in Walton, where the tyro has half a dozen trouts at his fly in the compass of a single page. His patience, therefore, began to fail; and, concluding that there was something adverse in the weather, or the water, or in the fish themselves, he laid his rod down on the bank, and pulling out his note-book, began inditing some lines to the king-fisher, which had just glanced across his eyes like a flash of blue light. He had written thirteen lines of his sonnet, and was concluding it with an "alas! that brightest things should be the fleetest," when he heard the sound of footsteps, and, under the impulse of his usual nervousness, he instantly pocketed his book, and caught up his rod, and began fishing with all his might, like

a schoolboy who had neglected his task for a story-book, or a lawyer's clerk who had been detected

"Penning a stanza when he should engross."

Fixing his eyes intently on the water, and professing to be quite absorbed in his sport, he hoped to escape notice or recognition; but his manœuvre was in vain: the passenger crossed the bridge, and, coming to his elbow, accosted him in a voice as familiar to him as his own.

"Powers of magic! what do I see? Raby Tyrrel transformed into a fisherman!"

"Even so, Miss Rivers,"—answered Raby, quite as much embarrassed as his line, which had just entangled itself with a bramble; "and fortunate it is that you are no poor woman, to whom even a chub would be a charity, for I have not a single fin to bestow."

"No great trial of temper, I dare say," answered Grace, "though such a result would make some anglers forget the meekness that belongs to the character. You were always confessedly averse to killing in sport, and I perceive you have been fishing very characteristically without hook or fly."

The angler blushed, as he looked towards the end of his line and discovered the deficiency. "I guess how it is," he said; "my artificial insect imitated the natural one so abominably that it chose to settle on yonder willow, and there it hangs, no doubt, with its steel sting through one of the twigs, instead of the gills I intended it to pierce."

"What! *you* fish, in earnest?" exclaimed Grace, with a mixture of real and mock astonishment, "I can hardly believe my ears. You have neither turned Catholic, nor is this Lent: what eloquent old Palmer has converted you and made you a disciple in his art?"

"The gout, Grace, the gout," answered Raby; "that has transformed every one at the Hall. It has converted my good-humoured merry father into a terrible tormentor, who has been riding by turns on all our necks, like the Old Man of the Sea. In obedience to his whim, I botched up a May-fly with my own hands, and came hither to catch a trout for his dinner. I wish he may not have to make shift on a minnow."

"A most filial work," said Grace, "and one deserving better success. It makes me wish that, like Cleopatra, I could send my divers to hang trout upon your hook. But pray fish on; for Sir Mark's dear sake, I would try myself to bob a blue bottle about in the water. Take another fly, and I will sit beside you and look on."

So saying, she seated herself on a large stone, which served as a parochial landmark, while Raby affixed a fresh fly to his line, and resumed his angling; but the consciousness of being watched, and especially by the dark blue eyes of Grace Rivers, caused a tremor from his heart down to the very tips of his fingers, and his line started and trembled as if a large fish had actually been struggling on the hook. At last he bethought himself of a way of diverting her attention from his own unskilful attempts.

"There, Grace," he said, handing her a book from his pocket; "there is a volume that will amuse you far better than my unsuccessful practice. It will delight you with its refreshing pastoral images, and some sweet madrigals to boot,

besides setting you right in your technicals, when you have to speak hereafter of the mysteries of the angler's gentle craft."

The young lady took the book with a smile, and was soon deeply engaged with its contents; whilst Raby resumed his sport, if so it may be called, for not a single trout would rise to his fly, though he whirled it about, bobbed it up and down, drew it backward and forward both slowly and swiftly, and then let it lie motionless. He might as well have fished in the zodiac, attended by "the man that holds the watering-pot" to receive "the fish with glittering scales." At last, in a desperate throw, he dislocated the top-joint of his rod, which dived endwise into the stream, then sprang up again, and, settling on the surface, began to drift away with the current. It was irrecoverable. He watched the slender top-gallant till it whirled out of sight in a bend of the brook, and then turning round to address his companion, he started to behold her, with a flushed face, hastily closing the volume he had given her to peruse. The truth flashed on his mind in an instant, and he stood aghast, in

something of the predicament of Cardinal Wolsey, when he saw his secret papers in the hands of his incensed sovereign.

As for Grace, she had cause for surprise, perhaps anger. Opening the pages at random, the unsuspicious girl had found some such poems as the Sonnet to the Woodpecker, and the stanzas recently composed in the park, which she read with more admiration than a professed critic would have thought due to their merit; and she was just meditating a compliment to Raby's taste in the selection, when her eyes arrived at the conclusion of some lines, the last of which convinced her that one poem, at least, was no extract, but original. It ran thus:—

If to believe that dreams were truth,
And all the fond romance of youth;
Each pictured charm that fancy prized
In one fair form now realised—
If to sum up in that dear scope
My all of joy, my all of hope;
Where faithlessness there could be none,
For all the sex was merg'd in one—
If to be happy in her nearness,
Holding her very silk in dearness;

As if my heart could have no home
But where she was, or was to come—
If from the contact of a finger,
An after-bliss for days could linger,
A feeling kept secure and chaste,
Till by the next sweet touch effac'd—
If to pine after pow'r and glory
But for one sake—if in love-story,
To make each tenderest phrase refer,
All that is bright and good to her—
If with all thoughts to haunt her bow'r,
True as the bee is to the flow'r;
Her image join'd with all day-scheming,
And nightly worshipped in all dreaming—
If these be signs that Love delivers,
I am thy lover, fair Grace Rivers.

The conscience of Raby instantly furnished him with the words which had caused so much confusion; and any young gentleman, of a modest unassuming disposition, of retired habits, and withal constitutionally nervous, may estimate his consternation when he found that, without preface, apology, or introduction to the reader, he had placed in the young lady's hands a plain broad declaration of love. He threw his fishing-rod into the stream, and hastily snatched the tell-tale book, which he seemed half inclined to send after the

rod, in practical imitation of Southey's dismissal of a volume of poetry:

> "Go forth upon the waters, little Book!
> I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways!"

"Grace—Miss Rivers," he stammered, "upon my honour—by all that is most sacred, I thought it was another book. Here it is—Walton's Angler;" and he pulled out old Izaak's work with a crash that told his precipitation had been fatal to his pocket.

"I am afraid—I hope—there has been a mistake," answered Grace, equally embarrassed, and with her face averted towards the brook. "My eyes caught a few sentences; but they are banished, forgotten, like words read in a dream."

As she spoke she rose up from the stone, as if to depart, but Raby detained her by seizing her hand. "My dear Miss Rivers," he said, "do not leave me in anger. However you may condemn the sentiments which accident has disclosed, say—oh say that you forgive me. Leave me the comfort of thinking that my inadvertence has not forfeited the favour I formerly enjoyed."

"There is no offence," replied Grace, disengaging her hand. "I have nothing to forgive; nay—but I have cause of quarrel, for I now know the source of many poems I have received. Was it fair, Raby, to pass them upon me under a feigned authorship?"

"The same crime as Chatterton's," said Raby; "but do not condemn me to the same fate."

"And what was that?" inquired Grace, not ignorant of the melancholy death of "the marvellous boy, the sleepless soul that perished in his pride," but willing to turn the conversation on subjects less embarrassing.

"To live joyless, and to die despairing," answered Raby, with a tone which proved that, lover-like, he would extract from all possible topics some reference to his own passion. "He wooed the Muse, and in return she starved him—and must I perish too, Grace, with this hunger of the heart?"

"Nay—I am not so implacable as Poverty," replied Grace, with a smile and a blush. "We will still be friends—under that relation we have

enjoyed many pleasant hours together, and—and—I would have the future to resemble the past."

"And why not happier and brighter?" exclaimed Raby, with all the animation of rekindled hope. "Why not happier, brighter, and warmer, as the summer exceeds the spring? Grace, dear Grace, chance has brought on the moment I have long desired—long dreaded. In that volume you have read my heart. You know the secret of my soul,—that I love you—dearly—deeply—devotedly—"

He paused;—while Grace, deadly pale and trembling with agitation, resumed her old seat on the stone, covering her face with her hands, like one dazzled by a sudden flash of that sheet-lightning which seems as universal but infinitely brighter than the blaze of a meridian sun. Almost as sudden, and as vast and searching, was the flowing radiance by which her own heart became illuminated in its most secret recesses, discovering objects before veiled in shadow, but now brought to view with a startling prominence;—in one instant, as by inspiration, she arrived at that mosts

precious of all temporal revelations, "I love, and I am loved!"

A delicious moisture crept to her eyelids as she became conscious of this tender truth; an indescribable tremor thrilled through her whole frame; she seemed spell-bound in a delightful dream, where the will is entranced and passive; and she had neither the wish nor the power to rescue the hand which, by gentle violence, was withdrawn from her face, now glowing with the warmest tint of the rose.

A low sweet voice in the meantime poured into her ear, like a strain of music, to which her heart beat time, accompanying such language as belongs to that eloquent passion which turns even the prose of life into poetry. It did not plead in vain; love at length found its echo in a few syllables that scarcely outmurmured the stream, and they tasted together that sweet apple of knowledge which introduces a pair of lovers into Paradise, instead of driving them from it. Many pens have attempted to describe the transports of such moments, but they have never been adequately pictured in writ-

ing, unless perchance on that mysterious block of marble in the East India Company's Museum, inscribed with characters which no human linguist has yet been able to decipher. Suffice it, then, that mutual vows were exchanged, and had just been ratified by an embrace, when an exclamation from Grace and a motion with her hand directed Raby's attention to a shadow in the water, and looking upward for the figure that caused the reflection, he saw the brown woman standing watching them from the middle of the rustic bridge.

The presence of a stranger at such a time would have been sufficiently annoying; but there was besides such a sinister expression in the dark countenance that lowered on them, that had the owner been younger, her angry frown would have seemed to belong to jealousy and the hatred of a triumphant rival. She soon left her station, and approached close to the lovers, fixing her dark searching eyes first on one and then on the other.

"So you have been wooing," she said, addressing herself to Raby; "aye, and you have been won," she added, looking earnestly at Grace. "I

know love-signs well. You have told your tale, and you have vowed your vows, but, like the seed of the shaddock, you know not whether the fruit shall be sweet or bitter. *I* know it: and take my warning; build not upon sand; the frail edifice you have erected may withstand a few ebbs and flows, but a spring-tide of sorrow shall wash away its very foundation."

"Never mind her, Grace," said Raby to the terrified girl, who began to tremble under her untimely denunciations; "heed not the gratuitous ill-bodings of a sybil, who, for a tester, will promise you the fulfilment of the most extravagant wish you can frame."

"You are mistaken, young man," said the woman, in a severe tone, "I am no mercenary prophetess, and if I were, gold a thousand times told should not alter the presage or avert its fulfillment. As for you, young lady, your doom is doomed.—If you take this pale-face you suffer the penalty of your choice—woe be to your depraved taste, you die the death of a dirt-eater."

"Woman!" said Raby, indignantly, "you are

mad, or worse than mad; but if you were all that you pretend to be, and linked even with the enemy of mankind, in the company of such an angel of light as this I would defy even the powers of darkness." So saying he drew the arm of Grace within his own, and attempted to end the conference by walking away; but the ill-omened prophetess removed at the same time, and still confronted them.

"Miss Rivers, a *wretch* speaks to you," she said, in bitter allusion to the epithet that Grace had formerly applied to her; "but marry that man," and she pointed to Raby as with the finger of fate, "and you shall be as wretched as I am. Heed not his smooth words, and his soft speeches,—they are but the sound of kitty-katties, the empty clatter of sticks upon a board.—There is one loves you with a love as far surpassing his as a pine-apple to a sleepy pear."

"Let us go," shuddered Grace, "she is mad and dangerous."

"No," said the woman, "my brain is sane and sound. She is the mad woman who ventures her

all in a frail bark that is doomed to founder. She is the crazy one who betroths herself to a phantom. —But you see not as I see,—you scent not the churchyard mould and the worm afar off, nor do you hear the death-toll forestalling the wedding peal. Grace Rivers! revoke your plight, if you would not be a widow ere a wife! You are depositing your young heart in a marble urn—yes, there you cling to him—foolish girl, you are hanging on a skeleton!"

"Do not tremble, Grace," said Raby, in an under tone, with an affectionate pressure of the fair form beside him, "do not deign to tremble at the croak of such a raven. So far from feeling any death-like forebodings, I seem as if the last sweet half hour had made me immortal. As for you," he said, turning to the woman, "your outlandish allusions have betrayed the origin of your soothsaying. In the West Indies this Obeah work might answer your purpose and the ban would be dearly bought off; but, remember, you are in England, where there are laws for vagrants and impostors—and if I may prophesy in my turn, I shall live long enough to see you doing penance at the cart-tail."

"And I shall live," returned the woman, with frightful earnestness, "to see you tortured in mind, heart, and soul, till you shall long rather for a bodily scourge though every lash were a whipsnake. Smile as you list—that hand you are now holding you shall never possess—let it go,—link not one finger with hers, or the hour shall come when you will curse your own cruel love, for pulling her down with you into an unripe grave. Yes, it shall close over you like this!"

As she pronounced the last word she threw a stone into the stream, where the water instantly swallowed it up out of sight, and before the first diverging ring had reached the bank, the speaker was twenty paces distant, and was seen walking swiftly away, with the graceful easy movements that characterise the females of the western islands. To say that Grace, or even Raby himself, was uninfluenced by the woman's forebodings, would be probably untrue: the human mind in youth, imbued with a touch of romance, is prone to superstition; indeed, love itself is a superstitious passion, and this religion of the heart, like the

Roman Catholic faith, is apt to associate itself with mystical theories, emblematical rites, idolatrous worshipping, and miraculous legends. What lover, who believes in his lady's transmutations, that her smile will turn a wilderness into a garden of Eden, can refuse his faith to the Philosopher's Stone? What admirer can gaze on his mistress in her becoming full-dress, without thinking that, like Belinda, she has had the help of more than mortal hands, fairies and sylphs, on every fold of her gown? What adorer can watch his own likeness reflected in his empress's eyes, and deny that the starry spheres are influential on the fate of man? Not one. Initiated in love, we become adepts in all other occult sciences, and are devout alchemists, astrologers, and Rosicrucians. Every-day creeds and studies, and common-place images, will not suit the high tone of the exalted phantasy. The all-important course of true love seems like the mortal progress of a soul assaulted on one side by legions of devils, and defended on the other by banded angels. Hope watches for signs, and Fear for omens; and the same intense spirit of affection,

which invokes round the head of its object the bright shapes of joy and promise, is apt to conjure up the dark phantoms of difficulty and danger that encircle its feet. The brightest sunshine throws the darkest shadow, and the horrible spectre of Death could never frown so sternly and blackly as when thus introduced into the full blaze of the golden glorious light of love.

Moreover, the brown woman had spoken with the decided tone of one who either felt confident of the infallibility of her prediction, or possessed the power and the determination of wresting the event to its fulfilment. Although she had at first repudiated the notion of fortune-telling, it had been attributed to her so generally along with the title of Queen of the Gipsies, that, like Mother Sawyer, in the old tragedy, who, from being a witch by repute, became one by habit, she gradually adopted the popular belief, and conceived herself endowed with the spirit of prophecy. A shrewd and subtle foresight, as to the probable course of human affairs, which she had formerly referred only to her own sagacity, experience, and

knowledge of the world, was now associated with supernatural prescience, and the vague looseness of her religious principles made her indifferent as to the good or evil nature of the practice, as well as the source of the gift, whether an inspiration from heaven or an emanation from hell. The imputed attribute greatly extended the dominion she already enjoyed—"the power of a strong mind over weak ones." Amongst the lower orders it invested her with respect and awe, and consequent protection from aggression or insult, whilst from servants and retainers it procured private good-will and unbounded confidence, furnishing her with a circumstantial history of the past and present in exchange for the glimmerings she chose to give of the future. Implicit faith produced its usual fruit, a blind obedience, and every menial that communed with her became readily a spy or agent in the family with whose fortunes she thought proper to interfere.

In a moody fit, with the Sybilline fancy strong upon her, she had accidentally become a spectator of the ratification of the new tie between Grace

Rivers and Raby Tyrrel, and, remembering the rival interests of her own foster-child, St. Kitts, her wish was no doubt father to the thought that suggested the premature death of the favoured lover. Appalled by her vehement threatenings, it was natural that Grace should shudder and cling to Raby, and it was quite as natural that Raby should fondly press her to his side and whisper words of encouragement, though his voice betrayed that he partook of one common tremor, like a nervous man at table who attempts, with a shaking hand, to distribute a shaking jelly. But the alarm was transient. The thought of death passed away like a fanciful illness from which the invalid suddenly recovers at the proposal of a party of pleasure; and as Raby looked at the beautiful girl, now destined to be his own, every gloomy shadow was swallowed up in light, and he felt as elated and confident as if his life had been assured in the Phœnix, his happiness in the Globe, and his love in the Hand-in-Hand.

Time flowed on as unheeded as the stream by which they stood, while they reiterated their vows

of mutual constancy, and opened their hearts to each other with the gushing confidence which belongs only to that fair fond pair, by name even harmoniously predestined to be everlastingly united, Youth and Truth. At last they reluctantly quitted a spot hallowed and endeared to them for ever as love's confessional; but, before they left it, a keepsake was offered and accepted, being neither more nor less than the poetical missal which had led to the disclosure. The flutter of Grace's spirits not permitting her to pay the intended visit at the Hall, she returned home, escorted by Raby, who never remembered that he had been forbidden to go to Hawksley till he stood on the little bridge, in his way back. As he stopped to rest, and gazed downward on the brook, now a Castalian one, his thoughts flowed into verse, and thenceforward the first leaf in his Walton contained a poem, which is not to be found in any other copy.

Still glides the gentle streamlet on,
With shifting current new and strange;
The water that was here is gone,
But those green shadows do not change.

Serene, or ruffled by the storm,
On present waves, as on the past,
The mirror'd grove retains its form,
The self-same trees their semblance cast.

The hue each fleeting globule wears,
That drop bequeaths it to the next,
One picture still the surface bears,
To illustrate the murmur'd text.

So, love, however time may flow,
Fresh hours pursuing those that flee,
One constant image still shall show
My tide of life is true to thee!

Having wound up these lines, instead of his fishing ones, he returned to the Hall, where an exchange of prisoners had taken place during his absence. Mrs. Hamilton was walking in the garden; the Creole was gone out for a ride; and Ringwood had previously cantered off towards Hollington, with an anxiety all his own, as to the convalescence of the Head of the Hive. In lieu of all these, Squire Ned was sitting in the drawing-room, tête-à-tête with the Baronet; the worthy friends being deeply engaged in the same pastime as those celebrated Irish gamesters,

The Trout and the Salmon
A-playing Backgammon.

Luckily for our Piscator the interest of the throws with the dice quite superseded the ineffectual ones he had made with the May-fly, and the unsuccessful issue only drew from his father one protracted remark. "I don't wonder in the least—tray-deuce—It would surprise me a deal more—cinque-ace—if he brought home even a stickle-back or a miller's thumb—sizes.—Egad! the fellow's head has got so bookish and wool-gathering—tray-cater —I shouldn't stare to see him some day—tray-ace —with a jack upon his hook, trying to catch a minnow;—the hit by Jove!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Come, bustle, bustle, caparison my horse.

KING RICHARD III.

A blow! Have I received a blow?—'Tis well.
I'll not return it now; but put it out
To interest—compound—interest on interest,
At most usurious rate; this single buffet
Shall grow to scores before it be repaid,
And then, like Nature's debt, shall be discharged,
Death sealing the acquittance.

ROGER MONCKTON.

THE arrival of the Squire, as stated in the last chapter, had the effect of releasing the weary satellites who had been in attendance on the gouty Baronet. Ringwood was the first to avail himself of the opportunity: as soon as his father and Ned had well settled down to their game, he joyfully threw down the pen from his cramped

fingers, and made his way to the stable, his temper not a little turned by the penance and task-work he had been undergoing, as well as by the imagined insults of St. Kitts, who had seemed to watch his compulsory penmanship with a malicious pleasure. In this wayward mood he determined to break through the *taboo* which had made Hollington a forbidden spot, and calling to the first groom he saw, he desired him to saddle his horse instantly.

"If you please, sir," said the man; "he's amiss. Dick ordered him a warm mash,—"

Ringwood immediately hastened to the loose-box appropriated to his favourite, where he carefully smelt his nostrils, coughed him, examined his eyes, and felt his legs with the gravity and skill of a professed veterinarian. "It's nothing, Davis, but a cold," he said, at the end of the inspection, "but I won't ride him to-day. Saddle Cadeau." This name had been bestowed by the Creole on a horse his uncle had lately presented to him in lieu of little Toby Spitfire, that had carried him when a boy.

"I beg pardon, sir," said the man—"but Mr. Walter is rather particular about Cadeau,—he lets nobody ride him but himself."

"I will try that," answered Ringwood, contemptuously. "If he indulges in such exclusive fancies here, I will break the charm. Mr. Walter shall trudge a-foot, rather than I will want a horse."

"If it's no offence, sir," said the man, "you are surely joking. There's plenty of horses in the stables—Sorrel, and Roadster,—or the cob—any one of 'em would carry you every bit as well as Cadeau."

"I will have *him* or none," replied the headstrong Ringwood; "so bring him out at once."

The man made no further objection, but proceeded silently to obey the command. He knew that the young Squire had been always accustomed to have his own way, and that his wilfulness, like that of a spoiled child, would only be aggravated by opposition. In a few minutes Cadeau was saddled, and led forth: "I hope, sir," said Davis, as he delivered the bridle, "you

will stand my excuse to Mr. Walter. I don't know what he will say."

"Let him say,"—answered Ringwood, coolly mounting and adjusting himself in the stirrups. "If he's insolent I'll transfer the bitt from his horse's mouth into his own."

So saying, he wheeled the animal round, and trotted out of the stable-yard; leaving Davis staring after him, so absorbed in cogitation, that full five minutes elapsed before he resumed the whistling of "Nancy Dawson," which this episode had interrupted.

In the meantime the Creole, perfectly unconscious of this invasion of his rights of property, willingly consigned his unfortunate drawing to the portfolio, in the secret hope that it might slumber there for another twelvemonth; and in a common spirit of disobedience to the Baronet's injunctions, betook himself on foot to the forbidden path in which Raby had preceded him, towards Hawksley. He had not gone far in that direction when, at some distance, he perceived the brown woman traversing the Park with great expedition; she

also recognised him, and after stopping and looking carefully round, altered her former course, and came swiftly to meet him. As she approached, he could hear her muttering to herself, her face was flushed, her hands and arms were particularly restless, and her step seemed sometimes like a stamp.

"Walter Tyrrel," she said, in a low tone, trembling with passion, "prepare your ears for a tune that will seem played upon your heart-strings. The election is over, and Raby Tyrrel is in the chair, and his cousin candidate on the ground."

"Speak out at once, woman," said the impatient Creole; "I am in no humour for unravelling riddles."

"Briefly, then," said the woman, "Grace Rivers has made her choice. She has chosen the white loaf, and leaves the brown one to the coarser taste of some cottage girl."

"It is impossible," exclaimed the Creole, hastily, forgetful of his own contumacy; "Sir Mark prohibited his going to Hawksley."

"Aye, but he went to the bridge yonder, and she met him there; and I am mistaken if she did not meet him half way in love to boot. But no matter. The vow is vowed; I heard it uttered, and saw it sealed,—heart pressed to heart—and lip to lip. Yes, Walter Tyrrel, I saw the pale face turn to carnation, as it touched with hers—but it shall be whiter, aye whiter and colder ere long, or I am no prophetess—his death is foredoomed. His flesh shall feed the John-Crows!"

"Or mine," muttered the Creole, between his teeth; "he shall answer to me at the sword's point, for thus crossing me in my course."

"Steel shall not meddle," said the woman, "but this match shall be broken if hearts should break with it."

"Mine is stricken to the core," said the Creole, with a deep drawn sigh: "hope cannot beguile me; this fresh stroke only shows me my unfortunate position in the world. Had Raby never been called into existence, what chance was there for me—a being of doubtful birth, and a dependent."

"For the first complaint," said the woman, taking a packet from her bosom and putting it into his hands, "here is a present remedy—for the cure of the second, we must have time and other means. Walter Tyrrel be a man, or would you sit down patiently under it; wear their white favours, and put a piece of the bride-cake under your pillow to ensure pleasant dreams?"

"Never!" cried the Creole, violently stamping and clenching his hands: "tell me—direct me—say what I should do, and it shall be done."

"Do nothing—and say nothing—wish only for revenge and revenge shall come—but not, Walter Tyrrel, from your hands. I will think for you—feel for you—act for you—and where can you have an agent more devoted than one who is all but a mother? One who will not shrink where you would shrink, nor scruple where you would scruple. My creed does not bind me so strictly as yours, but it has served me well hitherto, and it may serve you now. Question me not—doubt me not—what I do is done for your good; what is to be endured or perilled shall be at my own sole risk."

"I will submit to your guidance," answered the Creole, "but why must I walk in darkness—why blindfolded? I would rather see in what paths I am going, and whither they tend."

"Foolish boy!" said the woman; "where should they tend but to the fulfilment of the bright fortune I foretold for you? When Sir Walter Tyrrel stands at the altar with Grace Rivers—with all his dearest hopes and wishes fulfilled—will he care to ask by what roads he arrived there? Be satisfied that the way shall be as safe as the end is sweet. But this is no place for us to be seen together. Go!—love on, for your love shall prosper—and hate on, for your hatred shall triumph. But bear yourself fairly and smoothly as if a rival's rash vows had not come to your knowledge. In the meantime I will work hard to earn the love and gratitude which some day you shall render me. But farewell at once."

With her usual celerity she departed, directing her course towards a thicket, in which she soon disappeared; whilst the Creole retraced his steps to the Hall for the fear of encountering Raby, in

his present mood, which would certainly have led to an explosion, in defiance of the injunction he had received. His temper still possessed the tropical fire which his father had alluded to on his death-bed; and though he had learnt to restrain it for purposes of artifice, the sight of a successful rival might have inflamed it beyond his controul. Moreover, he was impatient to examine the important packet he had received, and stealing into the Hall by a back way, he ran up to his own bedroom, fastened the door, and hastily broke the seal of the envelope. The first paper purported to be a certificate of marriage, between Herbert Tyrrel and Indiana Thurot, attested by the signatures of the principal authorities of St. Christopher's; the unusual alliance between a white man and a woman of colour apparently requiring the evidence of an especial document. The other two papers were letters; one from Colonel Tyrrel, addressing the said Indiana as his wife, and containing the most ardent expressions of admiration and attachment; the other was addressed to the husband by the wife; and after similar outpourings

of love, broke into a warm eulogy of the devotion, tenderness, and attachment of one Marguerite as the foster-mother of their dear Walter. Every lingering doubt in the Creole's mind was removed by the perusal of these papers; and he resolved to resign himself implicitly to the guidance of the woman, in whose favour his parent had given such honourable testimony. He was now in possession of the inestimable document which made him invulnerable to the taunts of Ringwood, and he confidently anticipated that in the rivalship with Raby, his own star would become the ascendant.

"So then," he soliloquised, "the reproach of my birth is removed; that sting will still be aimed at me, but it has lost its venom; and the oftener the insult is offered, the more ample and bitter will be its retracting hereafter. I am now Ringwood's equal in all but his expectations—but no—if Marguerite reads fate aright, mine are loftier than his—the heirship of Tylney Hall and the hand of Grace Rivers. That bookish Raby too—let him exult—the brightest hopes of the two brothers are absorbed in mine."

So saying, he kissed the important packet, and deposited it in his desk; and with a prouder step and a haughtier air than the dependent St. Kitts had ever been known to assume, he descended the stairs, and stalked off to the stable, for it still wanted two hours of dinner-time, and he chose rather to ride out alone than to spend the interim in the drawing-room. He addressed the groom in a peremptory tone that matched with his humour.

"Saddle Cadeau, fellow, and be quick."

"Cadeau—Sir"—said the man, hesitating and stammering, as if each word was jolted out of him by a hard-trotting horse. "Cadeau—Sir—did you say—Cadeau?"

"Yes, fool!" answered the Creole. "You know *my* horse, don't you? Quick, bring him out."

"I can't," replied Davis doggedly; at the same time resuming the cleaning of some harness which he held in his hand.

"And why not, you scoundrel?" asked St. Kitts, who never condescended to restrain his temper with a menial.

"Because he *is* out;" returned Davis, with the quiet tone of a man who is giving a reason perfectly unanswerable. "Brown Bastard is amiss, and so the young Squire has taken Cadeau."

"What, Ringwood!" exclaimed the Creole, bursting into an ungovernable passion; "what! take my horse—without my leave—without apology—tell me, rascal, did he leave no message for me, when he took this liberty?"

"Never a word, sir," answered Davis, "if you mean in the way of begging pardon."

"No doubt," said the Creole, "it was more likely a new insult than an apology for the old. Villain!" shaking his clenched hand at the other, "I insist upon knowing what he said—the very words that he used."

"Why, then, if you will have it, Sir," answered Davis, giving, as servants are apt to do, a rather free paraphrase of the original version, "he said, if you made a fuss about your horse, he'd saddle you, and bridle you, and ride upon your own back."

The Creole made no answer; but his blood

boiled at the disparaging terms thus delivered: he took several angry turns up and down, muttering fiercely to himself; and, at last, stopping short in front of Davis, with his face almost in that of the affrighted groom, he said, in a deep imperative tone, "Saddle his own horse immediately."

"For God's sake, Mr. Walter," began poor Davis; but the Creole cut him short by sternly asking "whether he was to do a groom's duty with his own hands;" and, with a deep sigh of reluctance, the man proceeded on his ominous task. Devoutly did he pray for the return of Brown Bastard's master, before the favourite could be mounted; and he wisped, and sponged, and combed, and brushed, and trifled with the stirrups, and dallied with the girths, till a volley of oaths from St. Kitts proved that his patience would bear no more stretching.

"Remember, Sir, I wash my hands of it," said the foreboding Davis, as he took his place at the horse's head; but the West Indian made no answer; he seized the bridle, settled himself in

the saddle, and scornfully dashed the rowels into the flanks of the steed, as if he had been planting thorns in the side of its owner.

The gallop never slacked as far as Davis could keep him in sight. In fact, the excited rider had gone half way to Hollington before he pulled up; then, for the first time, he remembered the brown woman's advice, that he should conduct himself fairly and smoothly towards his cousins, and he blamed his own precipitation which would probably involve him in a quarrel too serious to be concealed from Sir Mark, who might recal the opinion he had formerly entertained of his nephew's moderation and forbearance. Besides an ultimate and full revenge had been promised in atonement of whatever slights or offences he might endure at the hands of Ringwood, and the most politic course would be to return with the horse to the stable, and to bribe Davis to secrecy. But it was now too late: at the very instant, while he was in the act of turning, Ringwood appeared in the lane; his quick eye detected his favourite at a glance, and in a twinkling the two horsemen confronted each other.

"St. Kitts—how is this—how dared you?" Ringwood added in a fierce tone, as he noticed the distressed panting of the cherished animal.

"I am not fond of lying under obligations to Ringwood Tyrrel," replied the Creole, with as calm a tone as he could assume, "and I should never have thought of borrowing his horse, if he had not previously deprived me of my own by a forced loan."

"His wind is broken," exclaimed Ringwood; "dismount, d—n you, dismount instantly, or I'll unhorse you—get down, I say"—and he reined up his own horse alongside the other.

"Let those who were the first to mount, set the example of dismounting," answered the Creole, warily holding his whip so as to be ready to parry a blow, if such should be offered.

"Down, I say—down at once," cried Ringwood, his voice choking with passion, "that saddle is mine, and a bastard shall not sit in it."

"Bastard in your teeth," retorted the Creole, irritated for the moment beyond prudence; "my mother was a mate for yours."

At this degrading comparison, for so the hearer considered it, his eyes flashed fire, and his whip rose and fell. Mutual blows were exchanged with the quickness of thought, till Ringwood, dropping his whip, seized the collar of St. Kitts, and striking Cadeau with the spur at the same time, the Creole was suddenly dragged over his horse's crupper, and fell backward in the road. Luckily the spirit of the high-couraged animal had been taken out of him, or his rider might have suffered some serious injury from the fall; as it was, the shock stunned him; and when he recovered and rose up again, he saw Ringwood seated in the saddle from which he had been thus violently expelled.

"You shall rue this dearly," he said, with a menacing gesture, "I will have satisfaction for this insult, and when *you* fall, you shall not rise again, as I do."

"If you mean blades or bullets," answered Ringwood contemptuously, "they belong to your betters—a barn-door cock has no right to steel spurs. As for satisfaction, all that a naked hand and arm can give, you are welcome to." With

the last syllable, the speaker put his horse into a trot, and left St. Kitts shaking the dust off his person, fervently hoping that the act would bring a curse upon his enemy as surely as was promised to the old Apostles. Bitter and deep were the imprecations he uttered as he mounted Cadeau, and rode slowly towards the Hall; but when he entered the avenue, and perceived Ringwood riding along it at a foot's pace, that he might leisurely look about him, his lips curled into a scornful smile.

"There he goes triumphing," he said mentally,—"forestalling his heirship no doubt—and looking on house and lands as if they were already his own. Yes, these are Sir Ringwood's old chestnuts, and those are his tall oaks—and yonder are Sir Ringwood's deer, and this is his ample park, and that is his noble mansion. And what are the possessions of poor Walter Tyrrel? An opprobrious nickname,—a disgraced body,—the clothes I wear, and the horse I ride—nay, *that* is Sir Ringwood's too, when he so pleases. I am a poor dependant,—rejected, insulted, outraged, and beaten—beaten

like one of his father's hounds! Aye, there's a caracole—what a flourish before he dismounts—and how lordly he ascends the steps of the Hall,—but shall it ever be his?—never, never, never. The door that is now opening to him will close behind his corpse. Yes, Walter Tyrrel will be living and loving, while the eye that scorned him shall be closed in lead, the tongue that slandered him shall be choked with dust, the heart that hated him shall be food for worms, and the accursed arm that struck him shall be rotting from its carcase."

Since the sunrise, the owner of this reverie had met with various and vexatious reverses: he had been thwarted in his love, invaded in his rights, grossly insulted, and personally dishonoured; but through all the gloom of these reflections his foster-mother's prediction shone out as in letters of fire; and the bitter pangs, caused by unrequited wrongs, degraded honour, and dissatisfied resentment, were considerably abated, when he regarded the human figure before him as a mere mass of mortal carrion, over which he should have to

exclaim, "how sweetly smells the body of a dead enemy!"

By what means, fair or foul, he was to arrive at this consummation, he could scarcely guess; but to describe honestly the workings of his mind it must be owned, that unnatural causes became conjoined with natural ones in his surmises, and he entertained dark and dangerous ideas, which recoiled indeed, but only to leap further, and still further onwards, like the waves of the advancing tide. To suppose those waves sometimes tinged with the blood-red of a stormy sun would but too faithfully denote the occasional complexion of his tumultuous thoughts, when the imperious demands of revenge became transiently paramount over holier claims. It is true that he dismissed the first sanguinary scheme as soon as formed; but the Cain-like suggestion, once admitted into the human heart, is apt to become a haunting one; and as the air-drawn dagger in Macbeth was only dispelled by the clutching of the real weapon, so a shadowy tragedy will pre-occupy the mind's

eye, which is only to be superseded by the substantial performance. The Creole, therefore, to his alarm, found his cogitations taking a repugnant turn, which produced a natural shudder; but, in spite of himself, these direful promptings became more and more frequent, and consequently less startling and horrible, till finally their attendant phantoms became familiar images, which as they came unbidden were allowed to remain or depart of their own accord. As yet he was only revolving in the outer verge without making any apparent approach towards the fatal centre of a vortex, from which, however, few are able to escape, who have once entered in the sinful circle. It would seem that to think of blood is to shed it; so certainly does the crime succeed its shadow. The man who once casts his eyes towards murder is thenceforward drawn towards it, like the bird fascinated by the snake, still trembling, but still hopping nearer and nearer to the object of its dread till it falls into its fangs. In the gloomy calendar of deadly violence this principle is frequently obvious: the cruel deed is at last perpetrated, not simply to

indulge the yearnings of revenge, or the hankering for gold, but to rid the wretch from the intolerable sway of a tyrannical absorbing thought—which had gradually overgrown his whole mind with the torture and tenacity of a cancer. Witness the struggles of Matthew Henderson, who murdered his mistress. Several times he mounted the stairs towards her chamber, and as often he descended with human compunction. But the diabolical suggestion was not to be silenced;—at each new attempt it urged him a degree further, till step by step he at last attained the bed, and the imperious impulse was drowned in the blood of its victim.

In the first stage of this awful progression, the Creole might be considered as now moving, though at a pace scarcely perceptible: it depended on Marguerite's own plans, whether he was to be made actor or accomplice in any deeds of violence; but if such were in contemplation, she had certainly succeeded in placing him in that initiatory state of preparation, through which a novice in blood must generally pass. The seed she had scattered had fallen on congenial soil; and the evil passions

of Hatred, Jealousy, and Envy, had sprung up rapidly into growth, like rank weeds, whose veins are filled with malignant juices, obnoxious to human life. Nevertheless, in pursuance of the line of policy laid down, he smoothed his brow, and discarded his frowns, as he re-entered the Hall, where, after repairing some disorder in his dress, in his own chamber, he descended to the drawing-room just as Ringwood extorted from Raby some particulars of his success in fishing,—with the confession of the loss of his rod, which, as the ownership of the implement was a point of some interest, he was especially requested to describe.

"I took the first that came to hand," answered Raby: "a dark-coloured one, I think, with silver studs on the butt-end."

"My own trolling-rod!" exclaimed St. Kitts,—his equanimity somewhat disturbed by this new appropriation—"it was a Cadeau, too;" glancing at Ringwood, "a gift from Woodley, of Maudlin's; but I beg my kind cousins to consider

nothing of mine as my own when they have a use for it."

"Spoken like a generous, free-going fellow," said the Baronet, having just gammoned his adversary—"that's what I call good action. Book it, St. Kitts, that I owe you the best fishing-rod to be had between London and John o' Groat's.—It does me good to see you hold so together, instead of flying off," here he smiled, "like Raby's top-joint."

This good-humoured speech had its due effect on the brothers and St. Kitts; and the latter especially adopted a tone of courtesy towards his cousins that was well calculated to hide his real feelings, whilst Ringwood pursued the same course, like parties engaged to meet each other in mortal duel, but who felt it expedient in the meantime to preserve appearances.

By favour of this guarded intercourse, the day passed over quietly, but the thoughts which St. Kitts had banished and staved off in company, revisited him in the night. At one time, in the

character of Death on the Black Horse, he rode over the prostrate Ringwood; and then, filling the holy office of vicar, as a substitute for the Rev. Dr. Cobb, he read the marriage service backwards, and the Devil appeared bodily to forbid the banns of marriage between Raby Tyrrel and Grace Rivers. Anon the brown woman appeared to him transfigured as one of those ambulatory sextons, with a cart and bell, as described in Defoe's History of the Plague, exclaiming with a loud voice, "Bring out your dead," and the livid corpses of the Baronet and his sons, and of Davis, along with the carcases of two horses, were cast out as part of the lading of the miscellaneous hearse. Other images, still more incongruous and fastastic, gradually crowded into his visions, and when he woke in the morning, it was from a spectral congregation of frightful demons, accompanied by one fair face and form, like the apparition of Faust's Margaret at the Witches' Sabbath, in the Hartz Mountains.

A short time after the occurrences recorded in this chapter, the three collegians returned to

Oxford, one of them secretly wearing in his bosom a lock of bright auburn hair, to remind him that he was destined to a honorary degree beyond that of a bachelor. By special agreement, they were to return from the University to be present at the fête champetre at Hollington, if it should happen to be appointed to take place during term. A great deal of amusement was anticipated by all parties at this festival; and even Grace Rivers suddenly changed her mind about visiting the Twiggs, and declared that, if invited, she should make a point of being present at their rural gala.

CHAPTER IX.

Sure such a day was never seen.

TOM THUMB.

The day,
The great, the important day, big with the fête.—

CATO.

You have now a broken banquet, but we'll mend it.
A good digestion to you all; and once more
I shower a welcome on you; welcome all.

HENRY VIII.

AT last, after several postponements, the welcome letter came to hand, permitting Twigg, Junior, to exchange the hardware of business for the soft ware of pleasure, the age of iron for the age of gold, by repairing from London to Hollington, in order to be present at the rural jubilee at the Hive, or, as the epistle described it, "the grand to-do out of doors."

The preparation for pleasure is sometimes a very painful interval; a sort of purgatory preceding paradise. As theatrical adepts well know, the getting up of a pantomime is quite as serious a business as the rehearsal of a tragedy: a spectator of its preliminary workings would never conceive that the product was to be that broadest of broad farces, the Christmas Festival in honour of Momus. Instead of a fairy-land, inhabited by Love, and Beauty, and Mirth, the area of the stage appears but a nook of this working-day world, equally subject to Care, Labour, Jealousy, Envy, Rage, Terror, and Disappointment. Instead of the brisk bounding Harlequin, a jaded morose mortal lounges about the boards, walking through his capers—literally taking his leaps standing, and giving a brief nod for a roll of the head. A weary and wan Columbine, with the same scornful indifference, drags lazily through her appointed figure, and then concluding with the ghost of a pirouette, leans sulkily against a side scene, and, like a Pharisee in petticoats, disdainfully compares the deficiencies of the rest with her own perfection.

The Clown, an indifferent scholar, painfully puzzles out his written part, with a vexed brow, a sleepy eye, and a most dogged mouth; as rueful and forlorn a figure to expect quips and cranks from, as the skull of poor Yorick. The very Fairies, delayed in their aërial descent by some hitch in the machinery, hang dangling aloft with faces full of terror and pain, while by frequent changes of posture, they hint to maternal anxiety, that their darling little limbs are horribly cramped by sitting on wooden clouds. The Sylphs scream from fright, and Cupid whimpers with hunger. All is noise and hubbub; for Pope's rule of optimism is reversed—Whatever is, is *wrong*. Nature stands on her head instead of the clown, and capers and throws summersets, till her phenomena are all topsy-turvy. Skies fall, water will not find its level, and the moon silvers the trees with a blood-red light; the thunder runs a race with the lightning and gets first. Unnatural connexions take place amongst the scenery, and produce monsters. A view of Regent Street, by new laws of attraction,

draws towards a section of a Storm at Sea, and Ben Lomond is capped, not with a cloud, but a stack of chimneys. Articles that ought to transform, adopt the code of the Medes and Persians, and resolutely refuse to change. Ropes break, hinges snap, water catches fire, and gunpowder does not ignite; spirits will not come when they are invoked, but the military march on, illegally, without being called in. Blunder begets blunder with the fecundity of the rabbit, till the boarded plain, the heights above, and the caverns below, are swarming with the awkward headlong progeny, blind as at their birth. The property-man is bellowed for, and a tailor responds to the cry; he is dismissed with a flea in each tingling ear, and testily sends down a carpenter, who makes the same April fool of a painter, who thereupon catches the call-boy by the nape, and shakes him like a ferret with a rat, which provokes call-boy's father to resent with a punch, and the lie direct, as to his call-boy having called. Oaths patter, and blows go round. Every living being seems reciting

some part of Collins's Ode on the Passions, with appropriate action,

> Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
> Possess'd beyond the Muse's painting.

Here an indignant dioramist raves at a boggling scene-shifter; there the enraged machinist knocks down a fuddled carpenter's mate. In front a frantic composer storms and stamps at an unmanageable fiddler; in the back ground an impatient Pantaloon clamours about a misfit,—meanwhile the three Unities put the same question as the three Witches in Macbeth, "When shall we three meet again?" and receive the same answer,—"When the hurley-burley's done."

In the midst of this dramatic storm, the author of the pantomime runs to and fro, and bellows till he is as hoarse as a boatswain, now through a speaking trumpet to the men aloft, and then throwing himself prostrate on the boards, to send an order into the hold. Anon he sits down, on any thing but the chair that is placed for him, but jumps up again, as if from a German stove, and rushes to clear the deck of a deafening chorus,

perversely ignorant of the memorable motto of Ravenswood, "I bide my time." Then a dilatory workman is cursed by bell, book, and candle, but he stops short to pronounce a benedicite on a fluttering band of affrighted dwarfs, who are taking his malediction to themselves. Sometimes he helps to lift a cloud, or props a house with all his might; sometimes he is seen bullying a dragon or kicking a giant,—extinguishing a moon on fire,—acting in dumb show for example,—scrambling up a ladder, —hauling at a rope,—tumbling over a crocodile,— at last, quite rampant, swearing at all eyes and tearing his own hair, he very probably makes a sudden exit through a forgotten trap door.

To see a pantomime in this stage, is like getting a glimpse of Chaos.

For some days previous to the fête, the Hive presented a similar scene of hurry, scurry, worry, and flurry. As usual, Twigg interfered in every thing; and his voice, like that of the Christmas spectacle-maker, was heard from all parts of the house, swearing, entreating, threatening, exhorting, directing, or disputing with his wife and

daughter on matters of taste. Never in the days of his industry had he laboured so unremittingly, so early and so late: he really slaved bodily like a negro, while Pompey the true nigger was set to work on matters far surpassing the dim intelligence of an African brain; the most provoking blunders naturally followed, and the black, as might have been expected from one of his complexion, "played the very devil." Many a tumble he had over the numerous packages from London which encumbered the floors and the tables, the stairs and the chairs. It was well the Hive did not happen to be a glass one, such as those which invite the spectator to observe the wonderful order, harmony, regularity, and exact distribution of labour, evinced by its busy inhabitants. Indeed, the House of Industry much more resembled a wasp's nest, where the peevish swarm were all restless and irritated by some recent disturbance. Every body was out of humour. Mrs. Twigg scolded and wept by turns, and threatened to faint, but had not time to spare for fits; and the cook fumed and broiled at her

mistress's culinary interference. The coachman sulkily helped in the kitchen, to whip cream instead of horses. The butler quarrelled with the footmen; and the housemaids among themselves. The gardener growled and grumbled while he transported his hothouse plants into the open air, cropped all his choicest buds and blossoms to make bouquets and fill baskets, nor did it make him amends for his real flowers, to see artificial ones in wreaths and festoons decorating his favourite "old statutes," so that Mercury looked as if he was going to dance in a ballet, and Neptune as if he had just come from Covent Garden. The grooms grew weary of galloping express on coach-horses, as the jealous tradespeople of the village tardily executed, or altogether neglected, the stray orders for forgotten articles which they grumbled "had better have been had down from London like the rest." To crown the confusion, the cub arrived full of boisterous spirits, and began to amuse himself with a whole flock of *larks*, a phrase that indicated those practical jokes, in which persons of limited capacity are so apt to indulge. He locked

the butler in his pantry—sent off the footman, when most in request, on frivolous errands—plugged the pipes of keys—fastened chairs together—set tables topsy-turvy—shut the cat in the china-closet—fastened the house-dog to the gate-bell—and then was discovered ranting as Belvidera, with his clumsy person thrust into a new dress that had just been sent home for his sister. 'Tilda screamed and scolded, the mother begged and prayed—but the mischievous spirit of this domestic Caliban was not properly quelled till Twigg senior had ten times turned him out of the business, twenty times cut him off with a shilling, and, at last, given him a sound cuffing with his own fatherly hands.

It seemed impossible that the festive preparations could be completed by the given day; but the time came, and every thing was in order. As the cub had predicted, the governor had rolled a great many entertainments into one. In the centre of the lawn stood a large marquee, containing an ample cold collation, which made a very showy appearance, the principal dishes being kept

cold by the new massive silver covers, each surmounted by the family emblem, a bee, big enough for a cockchafer. Above this pavilion waved, or rather should have waved, a broad silken banner, that had often fluttered and flaunted in the procession of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers, but now, for want of wind, hung down as motionless as a piece of hardware. In a line with the marquee was a target for archery, so posted, that whoever missed the butt would have a fair chance of hitting the tent; whilst, for the accommodation of anglers, the margin of the large fish-pond was furnished with sundry elbow-chairs, wherein the sedentary angler might enjoy "the contemplative man's recreation," in the immediate vicinity of a country dance and a pandean band, in those days as fashionable a band as Weippart's or Colinet's at the present time. To accommodate the musicians, the octagon summer-house was fitted up as a temporary orchestra, in front of which stood a column of benches three deep; for Twigg, on personally inviting the pedagogue of Prospect-House, and begging a whole holiday for the boys,

had embraced that eligible opportunity of borrowing all the school forms. On the opposite side of the garden, the orange-trees and exotics from the hothouse formed an avenue up to an arbour, christened, for the occasion, the Temple of Flora, and specially dedicated to the occupation of Miss Twigg, who undertook, in an appropriate fancy dress, to represent the Queen of Flowers. The Hermitage, in a secluded corner of the grounds, had its rustic table furnished with a huge portfolio of coloured caricatures; and the paddock was devoted to trapball and cricket, the wicket for the latter game being considerately pitched, so that a barn on one side, and a haystack on the other, would materially assist the fieldsmen in stopping the ball. A whimsical feature remains to be mentioned. In anticipation of syllabub, Daisy, a polled Alderney, was tethered at a corner of the lawn, a stone Cupid seeming ludicrously to keep watch over her, in the capacity of a cowboy.

Such were the festive arrangements over which Twigg glanced with a satisfaction that made him frequently wash his hands without water or soap,

while he mentally contrasted the gay scene before him with the humble prospects of his youth. He was dressed in a full court suit of plum colour, in which, as Sheriff, he had gone up with an address to the King; his partner, with her *embonpoint* and her pink satin, looked extremely like that hearty and substantial flower, a full blown cabbage-rose; while 'Tilda, in applegreen silk, festooned with artificial flowers, and her hair wreathed with real ones, appeared actually, as he expressed it, "a cut above human nature."

At the first encounter of husband and wife in their full plumage, she saluted him with a very profound curtsey, which he returned by an elaborate bow, as if in joint rehearsal of the ceremonies to come, and then they mutually congratulated each other on the propitious weather, for the sky was calm and cloudless, though it was rather hot for the season: indeed, as Twigg said, he should have thought it "very hard if a man of his property could not have a fine day for a fête."

One thing puzzled the worthy pair. Few of the neighbouring gentry had accepted their invi-

tation, though the Hive was so handy, and they had carriages of their own; whereas the metropolitan families who had been asked, came almost to a fraction, notwithstanding the distance was considerable, and many had to hire vehicles. It was singular, besides, that those who had the farthest to travel arrived first; guests from Bishopsgate, Ludgate, and Cripplegate, came in, and had successively made the tour of the house and grounds before a single soul was announced who belonged to the vicinity. However the interval was a grateful one, for it allowed the master and mistress of the Hive to feel really "at home" with their former connexions, and to indulge in the luxury of civic recollections, unrepressed by the presence of their more aristocratic acquaintance. Mrs. Twigg exhibited to her female friends her drawing-room, bedrooms, storeroom, kitchen, washhouse, brewhouse, and her unprofitable dairy; meanwhile Twigg paraded his old cronies through his dining-room, billiard-room, study and stables, or trotted them round the grounds, pointing out peeps and prospects, and then rushing back to act as showman

to fresh batches, who were successively ushered into the garden by Pompey, his black face opening from ear to ear, like a personification of Coalman's Broad Grins. The coachman, in topboots, assisted the footman; and the gardener, a sort of Jerry Blossom, fancy-dressed in a straw hat, peagreen coat, skyblue hose, and parsley-and-butter waistcoat, trotted after his master, to give the proper names of the flowers and shrubs, for the proprietor scarcely knew a peony from a pink.

At one o'clock all the company had arrived, excepting the Tyrrels and the Riverses; many of the younger guests coming in fancy dresses, more or less tasteful: there were Swiss, Turkish, and Grecian maids; nuns, Dianas, nymphs, Spanish Dons, troubadours, monks, knights, a shepherd, and no less than three shepherdesses, without a sheep. The air was now become oppressively sultry; but Twigg suffered little from the weather, in comparison with his hot and cold fits of nervousness and anxiety, originating in other causes than the mere novelty of his situation. First, he had to endure a long complimentary oration from

Doctor Bellamy, an appropriate answer to which would have cost the hearer more trouble than a speech in common-council; then he had to meet the Squire for the first time since smashing his decanters;—the pedagogue from Prospect House was perpetually addressing him with Latin quotations: and he was especially puzzled by the presence of the Rev. Dr. Cobb,—for archery and cricket were sports for laymen, and he could think of no clerical amusement, except inviting the worthy vicar every ten minutes to eat or drink. The occasional absences of his son kept him, besides, in an intermitting fever, for he judged rightly, that the cub, when out of sight, was engaged in mischief; above all, he could not help noticing that a damp hung over the spirits of the whole company, which he vainly tried to dissipate. The town party and the country party refused to amalgamate, and took opposite sides of the garden, like Whigs and Tories; nay, the very sexes seemed to antipathise, and the young ladies planted themselves in clumps on one part of the lawn, while the young gentlemen formed groups elsewhere.

Possibly, like the guests at the feast after the manner of the ancients, as recorded in Peregrine Pickle, each individual awaited the example of his neighbour how he was to behave or enjoy himself at so unusual an entertainment; perhaps mirth was depressed by the earnest injunction to be merry of the host and hostess, who did not know that to bid a wit "to be funny," is to desire him to be dull. As Twigg trotted to and fro with the activity and volubility of a flying pieman, he indulged in such patter as the following.

"My dear Miss Tipper, I declare as blooming as ever — glad to see you — take an ice—Mrs. Crowder, have you been round the grounds?—Rev. Dr. Cobb, a glass of wine—Pray make free, gentlemen — Liberty Hall, you know—Matilda, Miss Dobbs would like to see Flora's temple—'Tilda looks well, don't she?—Mr. Deputy, there'll be a collation at four in the tent; but take a snack beforehand — plenty in the dining-room — come, young folks, be merry, be merry—what are you all for?—there's bow and arrows, and cricket, and fishing, and dancing on the green, and music

—Mrs. Tilby, I know you're fond of vocals—run, Pompey, and desire Mr. Hopkinson for the favour of a song—my dear, do keep an eye on John, he's drunk already, d——n him—Mr. Sparks, a glass of wine—the same with you, Mr. Dowson —here, this way into the green-house—come, hob-a-nob—a pretty scene, isn't it, Sparks, my old boy—and all my own property—Mr. Dowson, I can't help remembering old times; but many's the time Sparks and me has clubbed our shillings together for a treat at Bagnigge Wells. A great change though, says you, from that to this. I little thought when I wrote T. Twigg with a watering-tin, on a dusty pavement, that I should be signing it some day to cheques for thousands. I don't care who knows it, but I wasn't always the warm man I am to-day. Mr. Squire, pray step in—a glass of wine—glad to see you, Mr. Squire—break as much as you please, and I won't say any thing; we shall only be quits—now for a look about us again—where the devil is T., junior?—Mr. Danvers, go to my daughter's bower, she'll present you a bouquet—Dr. Bellamy, a glass of wine

—Miss Trimmer, I know you like solitude; and that's the way to the Hermitage. Don't be alarmed at the cow, she's only flapping off the flies—Dr. Cobb, there's lunch in the dining room—Mr. Cottrel, do go and divide those young ladies—beaux, beaux, what are you about?—come, choose partners, don't let the band play for nothing—Mr. Crump, a glass of wine"—

Such was the style of Twigg's exhortations; who, unlike other lecturers, endeavoured to enforce his precepts by practice. He made a dozen ineffectual offers with the trap-bat at the ball, bobbed a fishing-line up and down in the fish-pond, seized Mrs. Deputy Dobbs, and cut a brief caper with her on the grass plat, and finally, fitting an arrow to a bow, the shaft escaped from his fingers, and passed through Mrs. Tipper's turban, where it lodged, like a skewer *à la Grecque*. Such a commencement made every one averse to archery, and particularly as Mrs. Twigg requested that before shooting any more arrows, they would let her put corks on all the points. As to angling, it seemed universally agreed, that on such a day

no fish would take a bait; and with regard to dancing, Twigg's tarantula did not bite any more than the fish, whilst the trap-ball and the cricket-ball were as much out of favour as the ball on the lawn. Music itself seemed for once to have lost its charms, and the most popular of Mr. Hopkinson's songs attracted no auditor but Dr. Bellamy, who sat gravely bowing time, and waving his hand in accompaniment of the long, elaborate, rambling cadences then in fashion, and which might aptly be compared to the extraneous flourishes so much in vogue at the same period, when the pen went curvetting off from plain pothooks and hangers into ornamental swans, ships, dragons, eagles, and fierce faces in flowing wigs. Indeed, from the evolutions of Old Formality's right hand and fore-finger, their sweeps, and wavings, and circumgyrations, and occasional rapid spinnings, a deaf man would certainly have thought that he was meditating and practising some such caligraphic devices on the empty air.

At last Massa Baronet Tyrrel was announced

by the obsequious Pompey, and the jovial Sir Mark immediately appeared, with his family, including his daughter-elect, Grace Rivers, the avocations of the Justice not allowing him to be present so early. The Baronet, delivered from gout, was in excellent health and spirits; Mrs. Hamilton seemed unusually cheerful; Raby and Grace were of course happy in each other's society; and even Ringwood and St. Kitts appeared either to have forgotten their old feud, or to have agreed on an armistice for the day. The host and hostess were loud and eager in their welcome and salutations.

"Oh, Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet," exclaimed Mrs. Twigg, in a tone of reproach, "how could you be so behind time? You promised to enjoy a long day."

"To be sure, madam," answered Sir Mark, "to judge by the field, I am rather late at the meet; but no matter,—a short burst may be a merry one; and as yet, from all I see, I have lost little sport."

"Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, a glass of wine?"

said Mr. Twigg. "A votary of Diana," lisped Miss Twigg, "must be a friend to Flora,—may I offer a bouquet?"

"I shall be proud and happy," returned the gallant Sir Mark, with a bow that belonged to the Hunt Balls; but in stepping hastily forward to receive the nosegay, he unluckily set his right foot with some emphasis on the fore-paw of a little Blenheim spaniel that was careering round Flora's green sandals. The poor brute immediately set up a dismal howl, and the Goddess, divesting her hands with little ceremony of the proffered bouquet, caught up the curly favourite, and began to fondle it in her arms.

"D——n the dog!" exclaimed Twigg, with his usual abruptness; "chuck him down again, and give Sir Mark Tyrrel, Baronet, his bow-pot."

"I am really ashamed of her, sir," said the mother, stooping and presenting the flowers herself; "but the little animal's a great darling, a real Marlbro', and a present from Mr. Ringwood."

The Baronet winced at the information, and

could have kicked the dog back to Blenheim with all his heart; while Ringwood, Raby, and the Creole exchanged looks of vexation with each other, which gradually altered into smiles, and at last they all laughed in concert. There is a story current on the turf, of a certain jockey who very profitably disposed of three several whips, to as many gentlemen, as the identical whip with which he had won the Derby: and the keeper, or under-keeper of Blenheim had practised a similar imposition on our three collegians, by selling to each of them the only spaniel of that celebrated breed that "was to be had for love or money." However, each prudently kept the secret. Twigg took the Baronet into the green-house for a glass of wine; Mrs. Twigg invited Mrs. Hamilton to take a peep at the preparations in the marquee, and Matilda led Grace to her temple.

"Well, what do you think now of the great Dutch doll with a ship's figure-head?" inquired Ringwood, as he watched the departing Flora with eyes full of admiration and triumph.

"Why, I have often seen Jack in the Green,' answered Raby quietly; "but I never had the pleasure before of meeting his wife."

"I suppose you mean her festoons of flowers?" answered Ringwood, indignantly; "why, it's a fancy dress—but I forgot I was speaking to a blind book-worm, who hardly knows a gown from a riding habit." So saying, he turned on his heel, and walked off in pursuit of the Goddess of buds and blossoms.

"Upon my honour, Raby," said the Creole, "I suspect your brother is turned a Pagan, and means to worship the mythological divinity who has just left us."

"Let him worship her," answered Raby, in an indifferent tone; "it is no concern of mine; he is as free to choose his altars as I am."

"Of course he is," answered St. Kitts; "but I doubt whether his father will admit your doctrine of universal toleration. I have reason to believe he would rather the vows of his eldest-born should be offered at the shrine of St. Grace."

"Nothing more likely," said Raby, with the

same composed tone; "my father always called her his first favourite; but as for Ringwood, he has not the taste to prefer Grace with that simple moss-rose in her boddice to the Queen of the daffodils."

The Creole bit his lip. He had meant to disturb the enviable serenity of a favoured lover, but the attempt failed:—the happy rival moved off, of course in pursuit of Grace, and St. Kitts was preparing to follow him, when he was arrested by a twitch of the sleeve, and the cub accosted him with his usual familiarity.

"I say, an't you a scaly chap, now, not to come in character? You promised me, honour bright, you know; and, thinks I, it will be a hat and feathers, and a long cloak; for you've just got the cut of the mug, and the brown chops for a Spanish Don."

"I gave no such promise, sir," answered the Creole, sharply.

"Come, that's a good un!" exclaimed the cub. "And I suppose you didn't promise to give us a little spouting? And you don't remember, neither,

the bit of speechifying in the lane——" the portrait, the portrait's the thing,—and truth stamps on it?"

"I am no strolling player, sir," said St. Kitts; "but perhaps you mistake me for some of your acquaintance."

"No, I don't," answered the cub, with a knowing wink; "I'd swear to your phiz any wheres, and no mistake. Who are you? Why, you're Watty Tyrrel, alias St. Kitts, alias Gyp."

"The time and place protect you, sir," said the Creole, between his teeth, "or this offensive familiarity should be chastised."

"Punished, eh!" said the cub: "if you're for a turn up, don't stick about trifles; the company's dullish, and a bit of a row will brighten 'em up. For my part, I'd as soon fight in a ring of ladies and gentlemen, as prigs, sheenies, and costermongers, and we needn't strip. So shy up your castor, and my tile won't be long after it."

"I have no inclination, sir," said the Creole, "to convert this garden into a beargarden."

"All fogrum," said the cub, adopting a favourite

phrase of the highborn and highbred Fulke Greville; "didn't Hamlet and Thing-um-bob fence before the King and Queen, and all the Court? It's only doing the thing more like Englishmen, with fists instead of foils."

"No, no, I'll be a party to no such parodies of Shakspeare," said St. Kitts, with a laugh; for he prudently reflected, that it is better to dance with a bear than to fight with him; and, besides, the altercation had begun to attract the notice of the bystanders; he readily took, therefore, the hand that was held out to him, and accepted the cub's invitation to see "something worth seeing," at a distant part of the grounds.

"There it is," said the cub, pointing, with a chuckle, to a garden-engine; "it's chuck-full, and a regular sneaking job I had to get it here on the sly. Come, man, pump away like a fireman, and I'll guide the pipe."

"I must first know what is to be got under," said St. Kitts, "before I help to play upon it."

"Why the arbour, to be sure," answered the cub; "those green boards are the back of it.

'Tilda is Flora, and that's her Temple, and as it's hottish weather for her and the flowers, I'm going to give them a benefit."

"You must excuse me," said the Creole, "but I will be accomplice in no such plot; I detest practical jokes."

"Backing out, eh?" said the cub, regarding his companion with a look of contempt. "Why, she'll only give a squawk; I've often cold-pigged her of a morning. But no matter,—I can do it myself. So here goes."

The speaker immediately seized the handle of the pump, and plied it vigorously, with one hand, while the other directed the pipe upwards, so judgmatically, as he would have said, that the jet of water, after rushing some yards aloft, fell in a heavy shower through the lattice-work which composed the roof of the bower. A loud scream, as he had predicted, arose from the interior of the temple, and almost before it had done echoing, Ringwood was in the rear of the arbour, looking round, with glaring eyes, for the projector of this piece of mischief. The cub, however, had disap-

peared, and Flora's avenger saw only St. Kitts, with his hand still on the pipe, which he had, too late, attempted to avert.

"St. Kitts, by Heaven! I guessed as much!" exclaimed Ringwood, at the same time advancing and shaking his clenched fist within an inch or two of the other's face:—"You scoundrel!"

"Take back your scoundrel," said the Creole, retreating a pace backward; "and carry your threats elsewhere. It was no act of mine."

"It is false!" cried Ringwood, vehemently. "There's no one here, but yourself, who owes me a grudge, or would pay it off in so infamous a manner. You knew I was in the arbour!"

"I have as yet seen nothing but the back of it," answered the Creole; "and my sight is not so keen as to pierce through deal boards."

"But you thought I was there, at any rate," retorted Ringwood.

The Creole was silent; he could not deny that he had supposed Flora's votary to be with her in her temple; but he did not care to enter on the reasons which had led to that inference; nor did

he choose voluntarily to give up Twigg, junior, as the culprit. This hesitation was attributed to guilt by the passionate Ringwood, whose blood was now risen to boiling heat. "You are a coward, and a liar, to boot," he said, fiercely; "but the punishment shall match the offence;" and he seized the handle of the engine with one hand, and the pipe with the other. St. Kitts, who saw through his design, sprung forward to resist its execution, and in an instant they were engaged in a desperate struggle for mastery. Every sinew was stretched to the utmost, the muscles started out on their hands, and the veins of their temples swelled almost to bursting; but the superior strength of Ringwood prevailed. With a sudden and violent effort he wrenched the grasp of St. Kitts from the engine, and dashed him staggering some paces backward, where, before he could recover himself, a gushing jet of water drenched his whole person, from head to heel.

"You shall repent this, by heaven!" said the Creole, as soon as he recovered from the blindness

and surprise of the shock. "It is water that drips from *me*, but *you* shall welter in blood!"

"The old story," replied Ringwood, contemptuously; "but you are freely welcome to all you are likely to draw from me, whether at boxing, or single-stick; for of course you mean the weapons that belong to your caste."

"Ringwood!" said the Creole, with eager earnestness, "grant me one request. Promise me, by your honour, that if the stain on my birth should ever be removed, you will meet me as your equal, with the arms of gentlemen?"

"Oh, with all my heart," answered Ringwood; "there's my hand on it;—but, mind, I must have good proof, evidence in black and white, and not in whitey-brown, that your mother was no slave among the sugar-canes. I shouldn't like, when I thought I was letting good blood, to find it was only treacle."

"Enough," said the Creole, with a hard squeeze of the hand that was held out to him; "remember —your honour is pledged;" and hastily turning

away, the speaker sprang over the fence, which was only a paling, and disappeared. At the same moment a smothered haw! haw! haw! from behind a clump of shrubs proved that this water-scene had been observed and enjoyed by the projector of the joke.

"So here you are," said Raby, making his appearance, "in this strange out of the way corner; I fancied I heard your voice at high words with St. Kitts. Pray what was the matter?"

"Nothing at all; he only began to blaze, and so I got him under," answered Ringwood, carelessly pointing with his finger to the garden-engine. And he lounged off into the bower, where he found the deluge wiped up, and his Goddess in statu quo.

During this interlude the dulness of the rest of the company had rather increased, and the gaudy flag, that still drooped motionless on its staff, seemed a proper emblem of their listless and inanimate condition. They stood about the grounds in groups, idle, weary, and dreary, and

seemed by common consent to have adopted the line of conduct of the Hon. Mr. Danvers, a sort of exclusive of those days, who, in answer to every proposition of amusement, lisped languidly, "that he preferred to look on."

"It's very odd a man of my property can't have a merry party," thought Twigg, as he looked round on his grand to-do, and saw the festive scene with a visible damp over it, like a wet night at Vauxhall. In the bitterness of his heart he sidled up to Mrs. Twigg, who was standing near the marquee, and said to her, in a low tone, "Our friends, d—n them, are as dull as ditch-water. What the devil can we do with them?"

"Nine, ten, eleven," said Mrs. Twigg, with an abstracted look, and a little nod of her head at each number.

"What the —— is running in your fool's head madam?" said the Master of the Hive, who was apt to use expressions not exactly cut out for the ear of our present Licencer.

"Hush;—fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen," continued Mrs. Twigg, with the action of a Man-

darin. "Drat that Pompey; I know there's more heads than plates." And she rushed off to scold the oblivious black. The poor African, indeed, during the last half hour, had fully entitled himself to receive what Twigg, junior, would have called a regular good wigging.

A breath of air displaying, for the first time, the Ironmongers' banner, it was discovered that the obtuse negro had hoisted it reversed, with all the armorial bearings of that Worshipful Company standing on their heads; and in absurdly attempting to rectify this blunder, by swarming up the staff, down came Pompey, pole, flag and all, on the dignified head of the Hon. Mr. Danvers, who was indulging his preference for looking on. His next exploit was in bowing and backing to make way for Mr. Justice Rivers, whereby he got a fair roll and tumble over Miss Bower, one of the shepherdesses, who was sitting very pastorally on the grass; and, by-and-by, recollecting some neglected previous order, he ran off headlong to execute it, popping down a trayfull of ices to thaw and dissolve themselves into a dew, under the broiling sun.

A long hundred of such little enormities were committed by the wrong-headed Hottentot; but only imagine the amazement of his mistress, when she saw him gravely conveying a reinforcement of cake and wine to the green-house in a common hand-barrow;—and conceive her still greater horror when he came back on the broad grin, with the same vehicle containing the helpless, portly body of the coachman as drunk as the celebrated sow of David. The only possible thing that could be urged in favour of the sot, was, that he was not cross in his cups, for during his progress he persisted in singing a jolly song, quite as broad as it was long, with all the voice that he had left.

"I shall faint away!—I shall go wild!—I shall die on the spot!"—exclaimed the distressed mistress of the Hive.—"I wonder where Mr. T. is? That Pompey is enough to—has any body seen Mr. T.? It is really cruel,—what can a woman do with a tipsy man?—Do run about, Peter, and look for your master,—Mr. T.! Mr. T.! Mr. T.!"

But no one responded to the invocation, although

the whole grounds resounded, gradually, with an universal call for Mr. Twigg. The unhappy lady was in despair—she feared she knew not what. When she last saw him, he had been worked up by successive mistakes and accidents to an awful pitch of nervous excitement, and she did not feel sure that he had not actually run away in a paroxysm of disgust and horror, leaving her, like Lady Macbeth, to huddle up the banquet as she might. At last a popping sound attracted her to the tent, and there she found the wished-for personage, cursing and swearing in a whisper, and stopping with each thumb a bottle of champagne, which had suffered so from the hot weather, that the fixed air had determined on visiting the fresh.

"Oh, Mr. T., what would you think!"—began the poor hostess, but he cut her short; and the following dialogue ensued.

"None of your clack, madam; but stop, those two bottles"—and he pointed to a couple of long-necked fizzlers; "d——n it, madam, stop 'em tight, — you're making them squirt in my face. There you go agin! Where's Pompey,—where's

Peter,—where's John,—what the devil's the use of servants, if they're away when you want 'em—curse the Champagne!—Here's a pretty situation for a man of my property!"

"My dear, do only have a little patience—"

"Patience be hanged! I've been standing so, madam, this half hour—till I've got a cramp in both thumbs. I told that rascal John never to quit the tent,—and you, madam, you,—with your confounded she-gossips—why didn't you come sooner? I'll tell you what—if ever I have a fête again—is any body happy—is any body lively—will any body shoot at the target—or dance on the lawn—or play cricket? No, says you, it's a failure, a regular failure; and as for pleasure, there an't a farthing in the pound!"

The colloquy would doubtless have proceeded much further, but for a succession of female shrieks which arose from all quarters at once, whereat leaving the champagne to take care of itself, the perplexed pair rushed out, with palpitating hearts, to enquire into the nature of this new catastrophe. And truly they beheld a sight to London-bred

spectators peculiarly appalling. The human groups that occupied the lawn had disappeared, and in lieu of them, the terrific Alderney was racing about "like mad" with her head up, and her tail bolt upright and as stiff as a kitchen poker. Driven to wildness by three hours' exposure to a hot sun, and the incessant tormenting stings of insects, poor Daisy had broken her tether, or more probably it had been cut for her by young Twigg, and she immediately began that headlong gallop which cows are apt to take when goaded by the breeze-fly. After running three heats round the lawn, she naturally made for the shades of the shrubbery, but being headed back by the gentlemen, she paused, and looked round for an instant, as if to consider; and then, making up her mind, she suddenly dashed off for the only place of shelter, and rushed headlong into the marquee. An awful crash ensued. Plate clattered, glass jingled, and timber banged! The canvas bulged fearfully on one side, and the moorings giving way, out rushed Daisy, and down fell the tent like

a clap-net, decidedly catching the cold fowls, ducks and pigeons that were under it.

A loud cry of a mixed character arose from the spectators of this lamentable catastrophe. The ladies screamed from terror; the expectant citizens bellowed from hungry disappointment, and some of the younger gentlemen, amateurs of fun, gave a shout that sounded like a huzza!

"She's upset the tables!" shrieked Mrs. Twigg, with her arms working aloft like a telegraph's.

"And there goes every delicacy of the season," exclaimed Mr. Twigg, gazing with the stupified aspect of an under-writer at a total wreck.

"The new covers——" groaned the lady.

"All battered and bruised—nothing but dents and bumps," added her husband, in the same tone.

"And the beautiful cut glass—not a bit of it blowed," said the hostess, beginning to whimper.

"Smash'd—shivered to atoms—curse her soul!" cried the host, with the fervour of a believer in the metempsychosis.

"My poor damask table-cloths!" moaned the mistress, with some indications of her old fainting fits.

"Hamstring her!—kill her! knock her on the head!" shouted Twigg, dancing on his tiptoes with excitement, and unconsciously imitating the action of a slaughterman.

After standing a minute at gaze, the cow had recommenced her career about the lawn, causing a general panic, and nature's first law, the *sauve qui peut* principle, triumphed over all others. Guided by this instinct, Twigg rushed into the green-house, and resolutely shut the door against the cow, as well as against Mrs. Twigg, who had made for the same place of refuge. The corpulent Mr. Deputy Dobbs, by hard running, contrived to place the breadth of the fish pond between himself and the "infuriated animal,"—the orchestra box, *alias* the octagon summer-house, was crowded with company,—the hermitage, oh, shade of Zimmermann, what a sacrilege! was a perfect squeeze; and Flora had clambered up the lattice-work of her temple, and sat shrieking on the top.

All the guests were in safety but one; and every body trembled at the probable fate of Mrs. Tipper, who had been sitting on the end of a form, and was not so alert in jumping up from it as her juniors. The bench, on a mechanical principle well understood, immediately reared up and threw its rider; and before the unfortunate lady, as she afterwards averred, "could well feel her feet, she saw the rampaging cretur come tearing at her, with the black man arter her, making her ten times worser."

The scared Alderney, however, in choosing her course, had no design against Mrs. Tipper, but merely inclined to enjoy a cold bath in the fish-pond, into which she accordingly plunged, accompanied by Pompey, who had just succeeded, after many attempts, in catching hold of the remnant of her tether. In they went—souse!—saluted by a chorus of laughter from the orchestra; and there, floundering up to their necks in water, the black animal and the red one hauled each other about, and splashed and dashed as if an aquatic parody of the combat of Guy of Warwick and the Dun

Cow had been part of the concerted entertainments.

"Confound the fellow—she'll be drown'd!" cried an angry voice from the greenhouse.

"His livery's dish'd and done for," responded a melancholy voice from the hothouse.

"Oh! my gold fish will be killed!" cried a shrill tone from the top of the temple; while a vaccine bellow resounded from the pond, intermingled with a volley of African jargon, of which only one sentence could be caught, and it intimated a new disaster.

"O ki! him broke all de fishin-rods and de lines!"

As Pompey spoke, he exchanged his grasp of the halter, which had become slippery, for a clutch at the tail; an indignity the animal no sooner felt, than with a desperate effort she scrambled out of the pond, and dashed off at full gallop towards the paddock, making a dreadful gap by the way in Flora's display of exotics, whether in tubs or pots. As for Pompey, through not timing his leap with the cow's, he was left sprawling under the rails of

the paddock; meanwhile the persecuted Alderney finally took shelter under the shade of the hay-stack.

And now the company, with due caution, came abroad again from roof and shed and leafy recess, like urchins after a shower. Twigg sallied from the greenhouse, and his helpmate at the same moment issued from the forcing-house, with a face looking perfectly ripe: the octagon summer-house sent forth a congregation like that of a dwarf chapel,—the hermitage was left to the joint tenancy of Raby and Grace, and Flora descended from the roof of her temple, being tenderly assisted in her descent by the enamoured Ringwood. By common consent the company all hastened towards the fallen marquee, and, clearing away the canvas, they beheld the turf variously strewed,—exactly as if Time,—that Edax Rerum,—had made a miscellaneous meal which had disagreed with him.

In the middle the tables lay on their sides with their legs stretched out like dead horses, and the bruised covers, and knives and forks, were scattered about like the battered helmets and masterless

weapons after a skirmish of cavalry. The table-cloths were dappled with the purple blood of the grape; and the eatables and drinkables scattered, battered, spattered, shattered, and tattered, all round about, presented a spectacle equally whimsical and piteous. The following are but a few of the objects which the Hon. Mr. Danvers beheld when he looked on.

Item. A huge cold round of beef, surrounded by the froth of a trifle, like an island "begirt with foam," with a pigeon perched on the top instead of a cormorant.

Item. A large lobster, roosting on a branch of an epergne.

Item. A roast duck, seemingly fast asleep, with a cream cheese for a mattrass and a cucumber for a bolster.

Item. Brawn, in an ample writing-paper ruff, well sprinkled with claret, reminding the spectator irresistibly of the neck of King Charles the First.

Item. Tipsy-cake, appropriately under the table.

Item. A puddle of cold punch, and a neat's tongue apparently licking it up.

Item. A noble ham, brilliantly powdered with broken glass.

Item. A boiled rabbit smothered in custard.

Item. A lump of *blanc*-mange dyed *purple*.

Item. A shoal of prawns in an ocean of lemonade.

Item. A very fine boiled turkey, in a harlequin suit of lobster-salad.

Item. A ship of sugar-candy, high and dry, on a fillet of veal.

Item. A "hedge-hog" sitting on a "hen's nest." Vide Mrs. Glasse's Cookery for these confectionary devices.

Item. "A floating island," as a new constellation, amongst "the moon and stars in jelly." See Mrs. Glasse again.

Item. A large pound crab, sitting upright against a table, and nursing a chicken between its claws.

Item. A collared eel, uncoiled, and threatening like a boa constrictor to swallow a fowl.

Item. A Madeira pond, in a dish cover, with a duck drowned in it.

Item. A pig's face, with the snout smelling at a bunch of artificial flowers.

Item. A leg of lamb, as yellow as the leg of a boy at Christ's Hospital, thanks to the mustard-pot.

Item. A tongue all over "flummery."

Item. An immense Macedoine of all the fruits of the season, jumbled together in jam, jelly, and creams.

Such were some of the objects, interspersed with Serpentines of sherry, Peerless Pools of port, and New Rivers of Madeira, that saluted the eyes of the expectant guests, thus untimely reduced to the feast of reason and the flow of soul. The unfortunate hostess appeared ready to drop on the spot; but, according to Major Oakley's theory, she refrained from fainting amongst so many broken bottles; whilst Twigg stood with the very aspect and attitude of a baker's journeyman, we once saw, just after a stumble, which had pitched five rice puddings, two custard ditto, a gooseberry pie, a currant tart, and two dozen cheesecakes into a reservoir of M'Adam's broth from flints. The swamping of his collation on the ait in the Thames was a retail concern to this enormous

wreck. His eye-brows worked, his eyes rolled, his lips quivered with inaudible curses, and his fingers twitched, as if eager to be doing something, but waiting for orders from the will; he was divided, in truth, between a dozen rival impulses, suggesting to him, all at once, to murder the cow, to thrash Pompey, to quarrel with his wife, to disinherit his son, to discharge the cooks, to order every body's carriage, to send Matilda back to boarding-school, to go to bed suddenly ill, to run away God knew where, to hang himself on the pear-tree, to drown himself in the fish-pond, to burn the marquee, to turn Infidel and deny a Providence, to get dead drunk.

It must be confessed that in some of these instances his aim was directed against very innocent individuals; but a man in a passion is never particular, any more than a hasty bottle of ginger-pop, as to who or what is to suffer by his effervescence. Calmer councils, however, prevailed; and, assisted by Mrs. Twigg and Pompey, he set to work like a Cornish wrecker, to save all he could of the cargo. The bloodiest battle leaves some of

the soldiers alive; and a decanter or two, a few glasses, plates, dishes, and other breakables, remained miraculously unhurt amidst the general havoc; a sufficient freight, indeed, for the butler's tray, which Pompey volunteered to carry into the house; but barely had the unlucky negro set foot on the threshold, when, with an exclamation of surprise, he dropt the whole brittle load at the feet of the brown woman; and, in another second, Pompey lay sprawling himself amidst the fragments, by a blow from her redoubtable hand.

After this exploit, the Queen of the Gipsies sprang down the steps, and, with the air of Moll Flaggon, danced and pranced along the lawn to the scene of havoc just described, where she began to amuse herself like a bedlamite broken out of confinement. First of all, she bowled a round of cold beef across the grass-plat, and then she sent a fillet of veal trundling after it. Next, seizing the gardener, who was collecting the fragments of the feast, she forced him to dance a round with her, ending the waltz with a trip up that laid the horticulturist on his back; anon, after a little game at

foot-ball with a fowl, she threw all the cold ducks, one after another, into the fish-pond.

The company in general stood aghast at this outrageous conduct, and wondered what character it was intended to keep up; whilst others, better acquainted with the brown woman, scarcely marvelled at her violence, but felt proportionably anxious as to its ultimate extent. Mrs. Twigg ran in doors to faint in her own room. Matilda prepared to mount to the top of her temple; the ladies retreated to the octagon summer-house and the hermitage, whilst Squire Ned, remembering the woman's partiality for sharp blades, judiciously caught up a brace of carvers from the grass, in case she should again resort, like Palafox, to "war to the knife."

"Stop her! seize her! take her up in the King's name!" cried Twigg, as he took refuge behind Mr. Justice Rivers, who was settling in his own mind the maximum of legal punishment he could inflict for this new offence against social order.

"To her, boys! to her!" shouted the gallant Sir Mark, with a corresponding movement towards

the intruder; but before he had gone half way, a mask was plucked off, the womanly dress was doffed, and, instead of the Queen of the Gipsies, he beheld Twigg, junior, leering at him with a pantomimical grimace, and in an attitude borrowed from the Grimaldi of that period.

"The old fable, by Jove!" muttered the Baronet, as he stopped short, "only the ass has put on a tigress's skin instead of a lion's."

The cub replied only by a harlequin roll of the head; but it was an imprudent feat to be performed by one whose brain was already whirling of its own accord; for, like certain precocious bibbers, who contrive to fuddle themselves before the dinner-cloth is removed, he had managed to be overtaken before others had set out; the natural consequence of this extra spinning was a sudden giddiness, and after a desperate stagger, he added his bulk to the general mass of articles which, in commercial language, had experienced a considerable fall.

The wrath of Twigg was at its climax. All his terror had turned to rage, and he seemed ready

for any extravagance; indeed, he was only withheld by main force from inflicting on the culprit a paternal pummelling. Nothing, however, could prevent his railing; and he actually raved at the offender, vowing to starve him, to make a beggar of him, to kick him out of the firm, and to cut him off with a shilling—and a bad shilling, too, if he coined one for the purpose. He made him over, bones, blood, and limbs, to the gallows, to the grave, to the devil.

"Pooh, pooh, pooh!" interposed the oracular Deputy Dobbs; "wine is wine, and a frolic is a frolic. Youth is youth, and we were all young once."

"Young!" ejaculated Twigg, "I wish he had never been a day old! I wish he'd been stillborn! I don't know what he's had, but I wish it had choked him!"

"Pooh, pooh, pooh!" repeated the Deputy. "Blood's blood, a son is a son, and a father is a father."

"I know all that," retorted Twigg; "but don't go to excuse him; pray don't, for it's unexcusable.

Only put yourself in my place. Here I am, with every thing respectable about me,—a man of property: and where's my son and heir, that's to come into it when I'm gone? Why going to bed, confound him, intoxicated—intoxicated by three o'clock."

"Pooh, pooh, pooh," said the Deputy.

"I shouldn't mind," continued Twigg, "if he made a beast of himself like a gentleman. I've seen the genteelest people get tipsy towards tea-time. But here he is, unsober before dinner; no manners, no breeding, no nothing. Is any body drunk but him? No, says you, not a soul; and common politeness would dictate, the visiters first."

In this strain the indignant Ex-Sheriff was eloquently proceeding, when, suddenly, a drop of rain, as big as a bullet, fell splashing on the bald head of the deputy; and then came a flash of lightning so vivid, and a clap of thunder so astounding, that in his confusion the host himself led a retreat into the house, followed by the company en masse, the gardener and Pompey, loaded

with the helpless carcass of Twigg, junior, bringing up the rear. The cub was immediately consigned to his chamber, with a fervent parental wish that he might be bed-ridden for a month to come; but the mother, who had recovered from her swoon, fell into a fit of tenderness, and apologised that her poor son, being so close confined to business, was apt when he had a day's pleasure to overdo himself. "It will be a frightful storm," she added, as a fiery izzard seemed written on the distant sky, "but, thank goodness, here we all are, with a good roof over our heads."

"Not all; yonder are some that want the whipper-in," whispered Sir Mark to the Justice, at the same time directing his attention to the window; and the Magistrate's brow darkened to match the Baronet's, as Grace was seen leaning on Raby's arm, and Miss Twigg actually clinging to Ringwood, in their progress towards the house. The two fathers exchanged a gloomy and significant glance, nor did their features brighten when at the make-shift banquet which followed, the same couples chose to sit together, evidently

enjoying the casual dearth of glass and china that compelled Grace and Raby to take wine from the same tumbler, and Flora and her votary to partake of fruit with only one dessert plate between them. The countenance of Mrs. Twigg, on the contrary, beamed with joy and triumph at witnessing the hopeful flirtation of Matilda with the heir of the Hall; and her portrait taken at that moment would make an appropriate and admirable frontispiece to the little volume entitled "Maternal Solicitude for a Daughter's best Interests." It was not, therefore, without a torrent of entreaties, reproaches, and regrets, from the mother, and some poutings from the young lady, that the Baronet was allowed to order his carriage the moment the storm abated; and the Justice followed his example.

These departures threw an increase of gloom over the company, which Twigg in vain tried to dissipate. Music was prepared, and the carpet was taken up in the drawing-room, but nobody cared to stand up. Matilda was sulky, and wouldn't sing, and Mr. Hopkinson couldn't,

through a cold caught in the octagon summer-house. Mrs. Filby was grumpy about her satin gown, observing, with an angry glance at Miss Sparkes, that if people must jump at claps of thunders, they need'nt jump their jellies into other people's laps; and the pedagogue of Prospect House was weary of uttering classical jokes at which nobody laughed. The Honourable Mr. Danvers began to tire of looking on. Deputy Dobbs was disappointed of his accustomed speech-ifying, for in spite of all his hints, Twigg set his face against toasts, not liking probably to bid gentlemen charge their glasses who had so few to charge. The rest of the Londoners began to calculate the distance of the metropolis. Doctor Cobb had been huffed by Mr. Figgins in a dispute about politics; Squire Ned, for the last half hour, had been making up his mind to steal away; and even the Crumpe family, who had come early on purpose to enjoy a long day, began to agree in their own minds, that it was the longest they had ever known. In short, every body found some good reason for going, and successively they took leave,

Doctor Bellamy being the last of the guests that departed, whereby he had the pleasure, and to Old Formality it *was* a pleasure, of bowing them all out.

As the last pair of wheels rattled away, Mrs. Twigg dropped into a chair, and began to relieve her feelings by having what she called a good cry. At the same moment Twigg threw off his coat, and seizing plate, knife, and fork, began eating like a glutton for a wager, occasionally washing down ham, beef, veal, chicken, jelly, tarts, and fruit, with great gulps of brandy and water. As for Matilda, she threw herself on a sofa, as flat inanimate, and faded, as the Flora of a Hortus Siccus.

Thus ended a fête especially devoted to enjoyment, but where the spirit of the work did not answer to its dedication. Premeditated pleasures frequently terminate in disappointment; for mirth and glee do not always care to accept a ceremonious invitation; they are friendly familiar creatures that love to drop in. To use a mercantile

metaphor, bills at long dates upon happiness are apt to be dishonoured when due.

On the morrow, John the coachman found himself out of a situation, whilst Twigg, junior, was provided with a place on the roof of the Highflyer on its road to the metropolis. Pompey was threatened also with dismissal, but as black servants are not as plenty as blackberries, the discharge was not made out; whereas the gardener, shocked at the havoc among his exotics, and annoyed by the nickname of Jerry Blossom, which his fancy dress had entailed on him, gave warning of his own accord. The cook received a message from her mistress, who was kept in bed by a nervous complaint, that she might suit herself as soon as she pleased; the dairy-maid received a significant hint from the same source, that she must butter the family better if she wished to stay in it; and to Dolly's deep regret, her favourite Daisy, with a bad character for gentleness, was driven off to the nearest market to be sold peremptorily for what she would fetch.

CHAPTER X.

What I have told you by my inspiration, I tell you once again, must and shall find you.

THE PROPHETESS.

Alas, to think that Love decays,
And Friendship wears with length of days,
And hands disjoin, and hearts dissever,
But Hate lives, grows, and lasts for ever.

TARLETON.

If all the fathers and mothers in the world were but dead, what a merry life would love lead! No churlish dad, nor crabbed dam, to snub it and flout it, and rail at it, till Cupid is fain to skulk about in dark corners, with his wings up to his ears like a moping owl.

CUPID CROSSED.

THE vigilance which the brown woman had pledged herself to exercise on the Creole's behalf, kept pace with her promise. When St. Kitts leaped over the fence of Twigg's pleasure grounds,

the first object he beheld on alighting on his feet was Marguerite, who had apparently been listening and watching the progress of the fête through a crevice in the paling. As she turned her head towards him, her brow was flushed, and her eyes were unusually bright and fierce, probably from her having been a witness of the indignity so recently offered to her foster-son. She hastily caught his arm, and with a precautionary finger on her lip, drew him aside to some distance. At last she stopped, and addressed him in a tone of mockery that matched with her words.

"We are out of sight and ear-shot in this thicket. And now, why does Walter Tyrrel shun the company of his equals and inferiors, and leave Grace Rivers to the uninterrupted attentions, and perhaps caresses, of his rival?"

"Let Ringwood answer that," said the Creole with a glance at his clothes, glossy with wet, "I am dripping from top to toe."

"So much the better," said the woman, with a long and freezing look. "It is a new baptism. This sprinkling names you Sir Walter Tyrrel.

Put up with this, and the puniest schoolboy shall make you a mark for his sixpenny squirt."

"Be at rest, Marguerite," said the Creole, with a significant nod and a bitter smile. "You are spurring the willing horse. My birth cleared, Ringwood has promised to meet me."

"He shall meet *me* first," exclaimed the woman, shaking her hand aloft, as if it brandished its familiar knife. "Twice, aye, thrice have you been foiled by his arm, and would you now meet him on equal terms? But what do I talk of equal terms? Has he a mother to weep for him? Has he a foster-mother even, to break her heart for him, and die in his death? Is there a poor, lone, desolate, wretched woman, that will lose her all in Ringwood, her last joy, her last treasure on earth, and all the dearer to her, that she has no puling hope of joy or treasure in heaven? Will a shrieking voice be heard in the wilderness of the world, crying Marguerite, Marguerite, where is my son—you have let him venture his precious life-blood against a red puddle? No, Walter Tyrrel, I will have no duel. When you strike,

you shall strike safely; but the hour is not come. Be fair and smooth till then."

"And the papers," said the Creole; "shall I not prove my birth?"

"When others have proved their DEATH," was the emphatic answer. "Those papers were given but for the present ease of your mind; and now go, for my watch is not over. Ponder the future and the past. Remember what expelled you from yonder garden, and remember whom you left behind. Remember, but seem to forget."

After these words, and her accustomed embrace, she departed, and St. Kitts saw her go warily and resume her former position against the paling. He then returned by a short cut across the fields to the Hall, where he changed his wet clothes for dry ones, and obtained a dose of mulled wine from old Deborah, by help of which, and a book, he had regained a tolerable state of comfort and composure when the family returned. The old plea of indisposition served to account to the Baronet and Mrs. Hamilton for his abrupt departure from Hollington; and his cousins did not think proper to

impeach the validity of the excuse. Neither did St. Kitts take any more notice of the affair; for an explanation, and the discovery of young Twigg's part in it, would be likely to draw an apology from the open-hearted Ringwood; and the Creole did not desire even this fraction of atonement to be set off against the gross sum of wrong which stood over for final retribution. Accordingly he conducted himself towards one brother, as though he had only been the sufferer in a boyish frolic; and to the other, as if love, rivalry, and Grace Rivers, had no earthly existence. "Fair and smooth," he repeated mentally, "fair and smooth—aye, I will be as fair and smooth to them, as thin ice beneath their feet."

In this mock harmony they returned to college; whither the heir and hope of the Hall repaired with equal resolutions to live and learn; but his fondness for sporting prevailed, and the latter design was but too soon added as another stone to that awful floor which, according to Dr. Johnson, is paved with good intentions. The new attachment which Raby carried with him, on the contrary, rather fostered than interfered with his love of literature,

and he laboured hard to win academical honours, in order to lay them at the feet of his mistress;—but to the gloomy passion that accompanied the Creole all others were postponed. It grew singly and with proportionate luxuriance, and, under the undivided culture of his mind, Hate threatened to become a Upas-tree of no ordinary magnitude.

In the meantime the engagement entered into by the young lovers was kept a secret from their parents, a course to which both Grace and Raby were influenced by those vague misgivings which, like summer-clouds, will sometimes assemble and lower in the brightest and bluest skies. A belief in what are called presentiments is commonly treated as the superstition of a weak mind; nevertheless, those who attach weight to such forebodings have some foundation for their creed. The young and enthusiastic especially are subject to such gloomy augury, but which may be traced to a very natural cause, namely, the revulsion of over-excited feeling, and the re-action of extravagant fancy, exaggerated hopes, and impracticable schemings. The most buoyant spirit will sometimes droop, the

strongest pinion will flag in a long flight, and hope be outworn by her own aspirings. In these calmer pauses the mind, like a poet when his "fine frenzy" is over, sets itself soberly to review its work, and, as well as the author, is fain to reject here and there a vicious conceit, to amend a disjointed argument, and to abate some hyperbolical flourishes. Thus Utopian views of life are saddened down to the tone of reality, and the distempered enthusiast, darkening with his dream, instead of tracing the influence of judgment and reason in the change, attributes his ominous depression to supernatural agency. To say, therefore, that the lovers mutually laboured under a presentiment of future evil, implies merely that reflection had thrown shadows of doubt and difficulty in the way of a passion, the course of which, according to familiar tradition, never did run smooth; the possibility of parental disapprobation had especially suggested itself as a contingent obstacle, and several trivial circumstances had concurred to establish the impression that both fathers were to be numbered among the lions in their path. The mutual flame,

lest it should flash on the eyes of the Baronet or the Justice, was consequently carried in a dark lantern. To one person only did the betrothed confide their engagement; and Mrs. Hamilton had suffered the misery of enforced vows too acutely in her own person to wish to cross true love, or even to cast a gloom over its first young dream. Moreover, though not a professed matchmaker, the union of her two favourites was the very one that her own wishes would have induced. She concurred, therefore, in their plan of secrecy; but at the same time hermetically sealed up from them her knowledge of Sir Mark's matrimonial project, in the confident anticipation that it would be defeated by the headstrong wilfulness of Ringwood, whose growing partiality for Miss Twigg had not escaped her penetration. It required all her influence, in the meantime, to restrain her brother from interfering with the compulsory dog-couples in his hand, for he had some dim suspicion of his son and heir's pursuit; but Ringwood was young, and the fox-hunter flattered himself he could take him up at any time, like a puppy, and break him from

Matilda, and enter him at Grace. On the other hand, Justice Rivers, with his extreme notions of the divine right of parents, and the obligation of passive obedience on children, relied implicitly on his own authority in case of any refractory affection on the part of his daughter, being fully determined that if she did not follow his lead, her ace of hearts, so to speak, should be trumped by his own ace of spades—the paramount card that ostentatiously imposes a duty on all the rest of the pack.

Such was the aspect of the domestic planets at the return of the collegians to Oxford, and from this period the family archives, in recording two unimportant years, may be supposed to present only as many rows of asterisks, emblematical of those fixed stars which are supposed to exercise no peculiar influence over the destinies of mankind. As in travelling, you come occasionally to some barren moor, fen, or weary waste, some Salisbury Plain, where you are fain to lean back in your carriage and get rid of the monotonous prospect by help of a doze; so in journeying through human life, blank stages will sometimes

occur, deserving little passing notice or future record. In such cases the historian may be allowed to take a nap, merely looking out occasionally to report progress, instead of watching and describing every milestone as though it were a Stonehenge. Or let it be supposed that we have now come to a favourable level, or bit of hospital ground, in the language of the road, where a judicious whip always makes play, and retrieves by a gallop the time he must lose in ascending and descending hills at other parts of the journey. Away go the four bloods, and as the inside passenger looks through the coach window he sees objects flitting by so rapidly that with an optical delusion rivalling the phantascope, a stone-breaker seems transformed into a cow in the pound, and a crow on a common into a cur at a cottage-door. The reader, hurried on with similar velocity over a flat of two years, will not therefore wonder in a few sentences to find the heir of the Hall arrived within a few weeks of his majority, and the studious Raby invested, in as short a space, with an academical degree; the former having pursued his studies so negli-

gently as nearly to fulfil the prophecy of Doctor Burdock, by being plucked, whereas the latter had applied himself to learning with such unremitting devotion as to materially impair his health. The progress of the Creole had kept pace with Ringwood's: his mind had been given up to baneful aspirations in which the Muses had no part; and Jenkins, the tutor, in addressing Sir Mark on resigning his charge, was glad to lose sight of the deficiencies of two pupils in his congratulations on the success of the third. But whatever might be their individual obligations to the University, Ringwood was the most indebted to Oxford, for he owed a sum there that he only cared to confess, as some people pay, by instalments, and he had only thus owned to about fifty per cent. of the amount when the Baronet became so angry that this prodigal son was glad to accept a voluntary offer from Squire Ned, to lend him the rest till he came into his own. The excesses by which these bills had been incurred had in vain been deprecated by the more prudent Raby, but his remonstrances and entreaties produced no other effect

than to render their accustomed bickerings more bitter and frequent than ever, and, thanks to the skilful stirring up of St. Kitts, their brotherly broils were never done by a slow fire. The Creole's own temper indeed began to give way under the capricious dominion of his foster-mother, who, by alternately checking and spurring, had at length put him completely on the fret; and while he exulted in the sound of contest between his cousins, he chafed at the curb which restrained him from plunging at once into the fray. During the last two years many items of wrong and insult had been added to the dark columns he kept, in anticipation of a day of reckoning; and, by the fiendish estimate of revenge, the amount, like the national debt, seemed getting too vast to be redeemed. His fate for life, moreover, was coming to its crisis. A general war was raging throughout Europe, and Sir Mark had not altered his intention of introducing his nephew into the army, a profession for which St. Kitts had a peculiar distaste, without a particular relish for any other. It was with no military view then that at Oxford,

in lieu of more scholastic acquirements, he had devoted himself to the study of fencing, and with such earnestness of purpose and incessant practice, that he became as perfect a master of the sword as Angelo himself.

To the Baronet, the Creole's classical acquirements were matter of indifference: he conceived that a knowledge of Greek and Roman tactics could be of little service to a general since the invention of gunpowder, and was content that his nephew should have the credit of having been to college, whereas the deficiencies of his son and heir gave him a great deal of pain, and consequently Ringwood found himself out of his father's favour. But this was a saddle he soon regained; and the inferior figure he made amongst black coats was forgotten in the pre-eminence which he displayed amongst those of scarlet or green. The literary honours of Raby, in spite of the contrast they suggested, were, however, a source of both pride and gratification to his parent; but the wan thin cheeks, dim eyes, and attenuated figure that deposed to the severity of his study, excited Sir

Mark's serious displeasure. He insisted more peremptorily than ever that the bookworm should betake himself to the sports of the field; and Mrs. Hamilton strenuously recommended the same course, not merely for health's sake, but that the son might propitiate the father, to whose matrimonial plan he was unconsciously running counter; above all, Grace herself urged the change so earnestly that Raby, with a smile and a sigh, promised to study the part, and appear in this new character in the domestic drama.

In the meantime the God of Love plied peaceably between the Hall and Hawkesley and Hollington, without any hostile interruption from the God of Marriage. Strange as such a collision may appear between Cupid and Hymen, it is too certain that in modern times these twin torch-bearers sometimes wrangle and fight before a lady and gentleman, like a pair of dirty little blackguard link-boys contending for a customer. Thanks to a succession of murders, arsons, treasons, burglaries, highway robberies, and other capital crimes of which there is never a dearth in civilised

countries, Justice Rivers, during two busy years, had been too much occupied with the criminal noose to think of the matrimonial one, and his daughter consequently still remained in happy ignorance of the match which had been made in her behalf. The Baronet, more at leisure to take notes, had detected Ringwood's penchant for Miss Twigg; but the undisguised effort of the mother to further the flirtation, comfortably persuaded him that it was a mere dead set at his son, whom he compared to a bull at a baiting. "They thought they had got him," he said, "safely tied to a ring; and to be sure the girl went well at his head, and there was no want of heying her on; but when it came to the pinning there might be a spin in the air, and so forth, and he'd advise Mrs. Twigg to make a back ready to break the poor thing's fall."

In this assurance he delivered himself up to pleasing anticipations, and, assisted by Squire Ned, with whom he was daily closeted, he gave all his cares to the preparations for an impending festival on Ringwood's coming of age, an event which promised a day of jubilee to the whole household,

with the exception of Tibbie, who gloomily looked forward to the coming celebration as a sort of Belshazzar's Feast.

"Ou mem," exclaimed the Scotchwoman, at a private opportunity with her mistress, "Ou mem, after word comes weird; there's a black day coming doon upon us at the last. Lordsake, mem, let's be aff to cannie Glencosie! Let's flee awa' hame like a leddy-launner—for it will be a sair sight to bide. Wae's me! we'se a' be ruined stoop an' roop!"

"If you mean, Tibbie," said Mrs. Hamilton, "the rejoicings at my nephew's coming of age—"

"Oh that's just it, mem," interrupted Tibbie, with a look as if she had seen a wraith, and a shudder as though she had just been well ducked by a water-kelpie. "Did I ever think to see 'O for ane an' twenty Tam' danced to siccan a daft tune? They say your nevoy's comin' intil a hantle o' siller, and sae a hantle mair is to be fuled awa' to mak' room for't! Ech, sirs, to skirl awa' ae bawbee for gleesomeness at getting anither, isna that braw guiding o' gear?"

"Never fash your thumb, Tibbie," said the lady, who, in conversation with her follower, liked to gratify the Scotchwoman with some of her national phrases. "There's siller enough to carry us well through the plea; and a little will be left besides, I hope, to give Raby a birth-day too, when his turn comes."

"The Lord grant it, mem," answered Tibbie, with an incredulous shake of her head. "Ilka man maun sit on his ain coat-tail, but folk are forgetfu' whiles o' the length o' the pouch. Gude kens, siller can rin awa' fast eneuch on its ain legs, like a Jock-wi-the-mony-feet, without pittin' wings till't. Aiblins, mem, ye'll no have heard the tae hauf o' the caraffle, but I ken brawly—for I airted it out mysel'."

"And what have you heard, Tibbie," inquired Mrs. Hamilton, "that makes ye expect such a kill-cow? But I suspect Jerry has been treating you with more statements than he can vindicate."

"Hout awa'!" exclaimed the indignant hand-maid. "Jerry, indeed! I wad like to see the hale clan o' Jerries wha could veendicate Tibbie

Cawmel! She has twa lugs o' her ain, and didna Sir Mark Tirl gie orders aboot the vivers when I was by? But ye were speering, mem, anent a kill-cow. What div ye think of roastit owsen—nae flesher-wark, nae parting o' foresey and backsey and heukbane,—but roasted hale, mem; muckle stirks, wi' true-luve knots o' blue ribbons at their tails, and their horns glinting wi' laid gowd. If that isna a kill-cow I kenna what is."

"I remember to have seen something of the kind," said Mrs. Hamilton, "when my brother, Sir Mark, came into his estates."

"And the Lord haud him and the estates thegither!" ejaculated Tibbie, with the fervent air of one invoking a miracle. "It wad be an awfu' thing for the Ha' to be roupit, stock and brock; for I jalouse Sir Mark's no the preceese sort o' man to save ony thing by a moonlight flitting."

"The moon must be made of green cheese, indeed, ere we come to that," said the mistress.

"Aweel, mem," answered Tibbie, "there's no saying. I kenned a blue-gown, wha was ance a cock laird. There's gowpen gowd to the fore

nae doot, but I'm thinking the King 'himsel' wad be scant o' siller for the towmont to come, after siccan an outlay. Ben the house, and but the house, it's a' ane. There's to be lang boards outbye in the policy, wi' meat for ilka mou', and lang settles eneuch for a' the doups in the parishrie. My troth, I wuss we havena to sup lanten-kail and pree barefut-broth after siccan a hirdum-dirdum!"

"And, of course," suggested Mrs. Hamilton, "so much meat will want a little drink along with it."

"Ou ay, mem," answered Tibbie eagerly, "the yill, nae sma' trash, but the best o' the browst, the yill's to be as free as dyke-water. Gin the hale clamjamfry dinna get roarin' fou' it canna be wyted on huz. And there's to be flags, and letting aff cannons—and musickers and jowing o' bells—and a King Solomon's Temple—gude forgie 's—blawn up wi' fluffgibs! And there's to be lamps burnin' blue and red and green ule,—and the loch, mem—the loch's to be turn'd into toddy, nae less,

and a chield in a coble wi' a wheen quaichs and bickers — "

"Is to serve it out to the young Squire's health," said Mrs. Hamilton, laughing. "And weel may the boatie row, say I, that rows to such a good purpose. So away to your own bed, lass, and dream over a dream, one half of which at least is likely to come true."

Thus dismissed, Tibbie retired, drawing the chamber-door after her, but not so suddenly as to prevent the words "wasterie" and "red-wud" and "down-come," from slipping in before it closed.

CHAPTER XI.

"Ho! more wine!—drink, lads drink. Never spare the claret, there's more a growing. At sea, when a ship crosses the Line, the sailors make a jubilee, and we'll have ours upon land. Have I not crossed to-day the line that divides boyhood from manhood, and makes me my own master? Ho! more wine I say! jacks, flaggons; and canns!"

THE HEIR.

There hath risen betwixt us
An immortality of Hate. Old Time
Shall sink to dotage and forget himself,
And Pity cling unto an usurer's heart,
Ere he and I grow friends.

B. CORNWALL.

Above all, be cool. Never draw the trigger hastily and at random, but take a good sight of your mark, and then pull, *if you wish to kill.*

THE YOUNG SHOOTER'S GUIDE.

THE festive preparations announced by Tibbie in the last chapter, although exaggerated in some instances by the force of imagination, were likely in the aggregate rather to exceed than to fall

short of her description. It was sufficient to ensure this result that the Baronet had such a Heydegger or master of the revels as Squire Ned, whose multifarious talents in mechanics, hydraulics, and pyrotechnics were all put into requisition, or rather would have been called out, if they had not of themselves volunteered to do honour to the grand field-day at the Hall. On a mound in the park he planted a battery, which was to fire twenty-one rounds in token of his favourite's majority, and the yacht on the lake was provided with a bevy of flags of all nations, to be hoisted at sunrise. A balloon of his own construction, and balloons were then in their infancy, was to ascend from the grounds: he planned an exhibition of fire-works worthy of a Hengler or Southby, and invented a sudden illumination, which forestalled the discovery of gas. In fact, the Squire was allowed to have out-done himself; but it was a labour of love, for the festival was in honour of his adopted son, and he halted to and fro, lent a maimed hand to every thing, and inspected the whole with his one eye as vigilantly and critically as any other overseer could have

done with two. He even took up his pen, with him a very rare implement, and made out a list of healths and sentiments to be given after dinner, some of the latter being equally original and energetic; nay, he actually attempted the composition of a song appropriate to the occasion, but his muse broke down in the very first verse, probably distressed and puzzled by his habitual elisions of the personal pronouns.

Another bard, however, volunteered to supply the deficiency—an idle, dissipated fellow, formerly under-usher at the free-school, from which he had been expelled for his bacchanalian propensities, and turning village laureate, he wandered from tap to tap roaring original ballads, for which he was rewarded with gin and porter in lieu of sack. But, although he served nine mistresses, they could jointly afford him but a very shabby suit of black livery, and the fluttering state of his rags procured him the popular nickname of Tom Tatters. This dilapidated Dryden composed a Birth-day Ode for the festival, and remembering the proverb about "a day after the Fair," he took

care to recite it a day or two beforehand, and rambled all over the parish, with a mob of boys at his heels, ranting his provincial Pindarics. A torn and soiled MS. copy, still extant, serves to show that besides a characteristic mixture of the ex-usher and the Bacchanalian, it united the absurd combinations of the celebrated "Groves of Blarney," with satirical allusions and pointed personalities. As it was popular orally, it may be tried in print.

"Come all you jolly dogs, in the Grapes, and King's Head and Green Man, and Bell taps,
And shy up your hats—if you haven't hats, your paper and woollen caps,
Shout with me and cry Eureka! by the sweet Parnassian river,
While Echo, in Warner's Wood, replies, Huzza! the young Squire for ever!
And Vulcan, Mars, and Hector of Troy, and Jupiter and his wife,
And Phœbus, from his forked hill, coming down to take a knife,
And Mercury, and piping Pan, to the tune of "Old King Cole,"
And Venus, the Queen of Love, to eat an ox that was roasted whole.

* * * * *

Sir Mark, God bless him, loves good old times, when beards wag, and every thing goes merry,
There'll be drinking out of gracecups, and a Boar's head chewing rosemary,

Maid Marian, and a Morris dance, and acting of quaint Moralities,
Doctor Bellamy, and a Hobby horse, and many other Old Formalities.

* * * * *

But there won't be any Psalm-singing saints, to make us sad of a Monday,
But Bacchus will preach to us out of a barrel, instead of that methodist Bundy.
We'll drink to the King in good strong ale, like souls that are true and loyal,
And a fig for Mrs. Hanway, camomile, sage and penny-royal;
And a fig for Master Gregory, that takes tipsy folks into custody,
He was a wise man tomorrow, and will be a wiser man yesterday.

* * * * *

Come fill a bumper up, my boys, and toss off every drop of it,
Here's young Squire Ringwood's health, and may he live as long as Jason,
Before Atropos cuts his thread, and Dick Tablet, the bungling mason,
Chips him a marble tea-table, with a marble tea-urn a-top of it.

Quoth Tom in Tatters."

Extraordinary, indeed, was the excitement that was produced throughout the parish, and almost throughout the county, by the announcement of the intended merry-making at Tylney Hall. It

would be intruding—unwisely intruding—on the peculiar province of Miss Mitford, to attempt to describe the commotion of the village; how rustic flirts and coquettes ogled their own pretty faces in round, oval, triangular, square, and nine-bob-square looking-glasses, or pieces of looking-glass; and how Polly Hicks discovered that yellow suited a brown complexion, and Peggy Bland, that pink ribbons looked well among carrotty curls. Dear Mary Russell only could correctly enumerate what country cosmetics came into request, such as buttermilk for tan and freckles—honey dew, gathered at sunrise, for red hands and arms, and home made pomatum, for refractory stubble hair. She, alone, who distinguishes with fine discriminative touches the genuine natural pastoral barn-door Rosina, from the Rosina that is town-made, she only could pourtray worthily the workings of feminine hopes, fears, jealousies, and vanities which kept all the rural maids, wives, and widows of * * * in a ferment. Faded satins were dipped in turmeric and logwood—rusty gauzes were refreshed with vinegar and stale table-beer.

Female dresses, were bought, sold, and exchanged —cleaned, dyed, and altered. Tall mothers, figuratively speaking, were cut down into dumpy daughters; spare aunts were let out with new breadths into fat nieces, and big sisters were tucked and taken in till they became little ones. The hoarded costume of a century back was ransacked to deck modern beauties, and sometimes the suits of three or four generations contributed to make up a single dress—for example, Miss Giblett had a mother cap with grandmother lappets, an aunt boddice, a great aunt laced apron, and a great grandmother skirt. Moreover, the dairy savings and farm-yard perquisites were laid out in fashionable millinery and cheap jewellery, so that Miss Rackstraw might be said to have a necklace of new-laid eggs—Miss Blossom, a tippet of fresh butter, and Miss Rugby, a new gown of fatted chickens, trimmed with green-gosling ribands, and flounced with turkey-poults. As for Miss Bilberry, she determined to go in her riding-habit, as the best habit she had.

There was a dab-wash in every house. At each

basement window stood a female, ironing or clear-starching; and even towards the dinner hour, the copper flue outsmoked the kitchen chimney. Muslin lay bleaching on the grass-plots, the currant bushes were festooned with lace, and the dwarf yews seemed literally setting their caps at the passer-by.

The Strephons, and Lubins, and Colins, in the interim were not idle; scarlet waistcoats and pea-green coats and yellow leathers were had out and aired and brush'd; and little Tidmarsh the tailor had so many orders that he was obliged to take on extra hands, by whose help he was enabled to send home a dozen new suits, so *non-fitting* that, like the poet, they seemed rather to have been "born than made." More than one yeomanry uniform was called out for service, and Mr. M'Farlane, a tenant recently settled on the estate, actually wrote to Edinburgh for some of the tartan of his clan. The bell-ringers practised daily, and the rustic choir of Tylney Church precociously rehearsed a Christmas Carol in case they should be called upon to sing. A few practised cudgel play,

in anticipation of a gold-laced cocked hat, and about as many went into training in wrestling, presuming upon an embroidered belt. Some hoped for a pig with a soaped tail; others prayed for a race in sacks; many speculated on a jackass race, and one chowder-headed hawbuck expressed a wish that there might be a bull-baiting in the park. With the sporting small farmers who joined the hunt, Ringwood was a great favourite; and they subscribed twenty-one guineas for a piece of plate to be presented to him on his birth-day: but the most memorable tribute was from Jacob Giles, a widower of a month old, who emphatically declared "he'd be dom'd if he wudn't goo to tha feast without his hatband!"

To the distempered mind of the Creole, these festive preparations suggested ideas which roused every rankling feeling in his bosom. He was about to see his enemy inaugurated in a sort of vice-royalty over those broad domains which he himself had been taught to covet; and he cursed in his heart the loud glee with which the menials and the tenantry anticipated the day of

jubilee. Even his faith in Marguerite faltered sometimes as he saw Ringwood careering before him full of high spirits and vigorous health, one of the handsomest, hardiest, and best limbed young men in the county; and the soul of St. Kitts sank within him as he asked himself the question whether the prophecy that hailed him as Sir Walter Tyrrel, might not palter with him in a double sense; nor did it tend to allay his perturbation that in spite of his continual rambles in the environs, he failed to meet with his foster-mother, whose vigilance ought naturally to have brought her into the vicinity of the Hall at such a crisis. Thus, although, as necessity and policy dictated, he wore a smooth exterior, he was inwardly like the Spartan thief with a concealed fox gnawing at his very vitals: but as the time flew on—as the hated Ringwood drew nearer and nearer to his day of glory—as his eye beamed with joy, his cheek flushed with delight, and his voice took a trumpet-tone of triumph—the fox became a wolf.

Another trial awaited his vexed spirit. The

Baronet, Mrs. Hamilton, Raby, the justice, Grace Rivers, and Squire Ned, had severally prepared gifts of affection and friendship to be presented to Ringwood on his birth-day; and the Creole's brow darkened as he remembered that a similar offering would be expected at his hands. The idea of what seemed to him in the light of an act of homage to his cousin was bitter as wormwood, and especially as he had no such fatal gift to bestow as the shirt of Nessus, or the arrows that reduced Philoctetes to worse than death. "Never!" he muttered, "never! They may make me a walking figure in this mummery, but not a prominent actor. Shall I fawn upon him, and wish him long life—I, that would willingly risk mine to take his? Shall I offer him tokens of remembrance? Remembrance!—the memory of slanderous contumely—of foul wrongs—of infamous violence. Besides, witness my horse—he would rather seize a Cadeau from me than accept one. No, let those that list shout Ringwood for ever—they know not that all their joy is shed like sun-

shine on a gravestone—for I will still hope that hope—and that all the brightness and glory which now surround their idol, are but as the phosphorescence of a putrid carcass!"

In a milder spirit, and sympathising more naturally with the scene around him, Raby forgot, or postponed, all subjects of difference with his brother. Hitherto he had received no hint of the paternal project which assigned Grace over to Ringwood; and even with such knowledge, the obvious partiality of the latter for Miss Twigg would have disarmed him of all thoughts of jealousy or rivalry. A partaker, therefore, of the general good-will and affection towards the hero of the fête, he not only prepared his own gift for the occasion, but resolved to give an especial proof of the interest he took in the event. He had promised to turn, or at least try to turn a sportsman, a course that involved some sacrifice of feeling, for his sensitiveness on the deprivation of animal life has been already recorded; and it seemed to him, that if any thing could counter-

balance the pain of first acting against his scruples, it would be the gratification of making his maiden offering of game at the family festival.

With these views he sought a repository of arms at the head of the hall stairs, and which Ringwood had been accustomed to call his "Sporting Magazine." It was a gallery which might truly have been christened a shooting gallery; for, instead of old family portraits, the usual ornaments of such places, it was hung round with sporting weapons of various age and fashion. Here depended a cross-bow, murderously familiar to the rookery; a cluster of peacock's plumes being drawn between the string and its polished steel arch. There rested a self yew long-bow with its quiver of yard-long arrows, and beneath it an Indian bow, painted and gilded, and curving to and fro like a snake. Beside these hung an antique sword, with a black horn handle, curiously carved, the nut brown blade being indented with a reynard in outline, illustrative of the old dramatical invocation to a sword of "Come out, fox." On the opposite wall gleamed the bright barrels of

muskets and fowling-pieces, single and double, rifles of different make, horse pistols and pistols for duelling. A legion of supplementary hooks and nails served for the deposit of shot-belts, powder-horns, and what the graphic Mr. George Robins would call an infinity of sundries. The third side contained angling and trolling rods, landing nets, and all the apparatus of the fisherman; and each wall was furnished with appropriate stuffed specimens of feræ naturæ that had been killed on the estate.

Here, then, Raby, for the first time in his life, bestowed his serious thoughts upon a gun, and took some interest in knowing its barrel from its butt-end. Casting a bewildered eye from one mysterious implement to another, he took each after each into his hand, and endeavoured with all the might of his mind to acquire what Dr. Watts, in his Logic, so strenuously recommends to a young student, namely, "a knowledge of things." At last he made choice of a weapon, and just as he was reaching out his hands towards a regulation musket, which, at the approach of the war, had

served in the county militia, the Creole glided quietly to his elbow.

"Not that Brown Bess," said St. Kitts, "unless you contemplate a campaign on the continent. Take my single gun yonder, it's a killing barrel at sixty yards."

"I wish to try one of Ringwood's," answered Raby; and taking up another weapon, he began to examine it with a deliberate minuteness, which implied that he wanted the scrutiny to outlast the unwelcome presence of his observer. But the patience of the Creole was like that of Job, and after a tedious cross-examination of the gun, Raby was fain to transfer his attentions to another, a double barrel, which, after a very mature consideration, he seemed inclined to select.

"Be sure your flints are good," said the Creole, taking the gun as he spoke from the other's hand, and drawing back the hammer to full-cock, he pulled the trigger. An explosion instantly followed that made all the sporting implements clatter against the wall, whilst Raby started a pace or two backward. "Good God, St. Kitts!" he

exclaimed, "do you want to kill me?" and a foul suspicion glanced across his brain, which seemed to vibrate with his nerves.

"If I did," answered the Creole, calmly, "I flatter myself I could take a truer aim than that;" and he pointed to the marks which the charge had made in the ceiling at the opposite end of the gallery.

Raby made no answer, but proceeded to reload the piece, tacitly rejecting a motion of assistance that was tendered by St. Kitts. Pressing back the spring of a powder flask, he suffered an unlimited portion of the contents to pass into the barrel, which it occupied some five or six inches deep, and then pouring in a quantity of shot, ad libitum, he covered all with a couple of wads and rammed down. St. Kitts watched the operation in silence, and suffered the other even to advance some steps with this desperate load in the weapon, before he interfered in his usual quiet tone.

"If I wished your injury, Raby, I might safely leave it to your own hand. The best barrel of proof ever made would shiver to atoms with such

a charge as you have just crammed into that gun upon your shoulder."

Raby, with some trepidation, prepared to rid his hands of their dangerous burthen, when the Creole, taking the gun, drew the charge, and then inviting the other to observe the proper method, he reloaded the barrel with the appropriate measures of powder and lead. A hot blush passed over Raby's face, as he recalled his unworthy suspicions, and he promptly and gratefully accepted the Creole's offer to accompany him in his intended expedition.

It was one of those fine evenings in September, when the sun with a peculiar glow burns upon the first brown and yellow tints of autumn, making amends, by apparent warmth to the eye, for the actual decrease of heat with the wane of the year. The hour was one favourable to the sportsman. The hares, leaving their forms, began to steal out of cover, and the partridges were feeding and calling to each other: but in vain puss and birds presented themselves in every variety of course or flight. Raby, besides being nervous, was

rather short-sighted; and before he could recover from the flurry of the hare's sudden bolt, and the alarming whirr of the covey, the game was far out of range, if not actually beyond his sight. After repeated failures, it was agreed that they should repair to the warren, as a forlorn hope, for a couple or two of rabbits would be better than nothing, and provided the tyro was not nice about shooting Bunny standing or squatting, or rearing up on his hind legs to look about him, or to cat-wash his little round face, there was an even chance that Raby might carry home a few coneys.

At one extremity of the park there was an extensive piece of rough waste ground, of about twenty acres, which had never been brought into cultivation, on account of its value as a noted harbour for snipes, which seemed to take a special delight in its rushy plashes. At the northern extremity the ground rose rather abruptly into a mount, known as the one-tree hill, from a remarkable oak which occupied its summit. The whole of this eminence was undermined by a vast quantity of wild rabbits, which early in the morning and at

sunset were seen browsing and sporting in considerable numbers. In this direction Raby and his cousin leisurely sauntered, under cover of an irregular belt of plantation which skirted the waste ground I have already mentioned. The dogs were kept at heel, and, for fear of alarming their prey, the young men spoke seldom, and in whispers; but in spite of this precaution, the eye of Raby, unaccustomed to detect such objects, discerned little of the timid dusky grey animals, whose flight was indicated from time to time by the finger of his companion, save the distant white gleam of a departing tail. Thus they walked past the brow of the hill without a single shot; they then visited Old Sarum and Gatton, for so Ringwood had christened two especially rotten parts of the said eminence, but still without seeing any sitting burrow member who might be forced to accept Chiltern Hundreds of number four. There remained but to try a level of scarcely an acre beyond the mount; and here the Creole, by signs, directed the gunner to take his station behind some brushwood, and told him to keep watch over a small open plot,

bounded, at about fifteen yards distance, by fern that was breast high. They had hardly been thus ambushed for five minutes, when a movement took place in a patch of fern lofty above the rest, a stir that could not be attributed to the wind, for there was scarcely a breath of air. The Creole pointed it out to his companion, and in a whisper gave him his directions. "Powder costs little; we must take chance shots. You see that tall thistle; aim about a yard below it, where you see the stir."

Raby shot in the direction recommended, his finger at once pulling both triggers, and the report of two barrels mingled as one. Instantly a shriek, louder than rabbit ever cried in its agony, rent the air. The tall fern was dashed about by the convulsive tossing of human limbs, and in a few seconds the body of a man rolled out of the dense herbage into the open space. The recoil of the gun, the flash and the loud report, had produced their full effect on the nerves of Raby; but horror rooted him to the spot, when, as the smoke cleared away, he saw the convulsed frame of his victim

now drawn up till the knees met the face, and then inversely arched till the body rested merely on the heels and the back of the head.

The struggle lasted not long: this motion ceased, and the petrified homicide was enabled to recognise, in the countenance of his victim—the features of RINGWOOD TYRREL!

END OF VOL. II.

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